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ABSTRACT

The report presents findings from an evaluation of an academic high school in Edmonton, Alberta. Following Stake's Responsive Model, the various stakeholder groups (such as trustees, administrators, staff and students) were identified and interviewed or given questionnaires. Observations are presented in terms of four topic areas: (1) characteristics of the school, (2) description of the honors program, (3) stakeholder views and intents, and (4) scores on attitude measures. A Section on concerns and problems raises issues regarding philosophical and operational considerations. Among findings discussed are that the special program was being delivered largely as planned and was serving an identifiable group of students who were happy with the program. Recommendations include continuation of the program, study of the selection procedures, establishment of uniform definitions for honors courses, and more direct involvement in the program by central office staff. (CL)

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IDENTIFYING THE GIFTED AND PROVIDING FOR THEIR EDUCATION

AN EVALUATION OF SCHOOL BASED PROCEDURES

IN THE EDMONTON CATHOLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

PART II: AN EVALUATION OF THE HONORS PROGRAM IN

ARCHBISHOP MacDONALD HIGH SCHOOL

Funded by the Planning Services Branch of Alberta Education
Through the County of Strathcona

S.C.T. Clarke and V.R. Nyberg

June, 1985

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SUMMARY

The evaluation of the honors program in Archbishop MacDonald High School followed the Stake models. The various stakeholder groups were identified and their views obtained through interviews or questionnaires or both. Included were trustees, central office administrators, students eligible to attend the honors program and their parents, staff of Archbishop MacDonald High School, principals of other high schools, junior high school principals, assistant principals, counsellors, and teachers of Grade IX Language Arts, Social Studies, Mathematics and Science.

A number of intents, issues, problems and concerns were identified. One was the nature of the high school; that is whether the comprehensive high school is still the ideal for post-secondary education and if there is room for specialized high schools. Another was the question of who benefits from programs designed to challenge the academically capable. A third one, difficult and important, was the nature of an honors program: goals, features, and a definition. Still another was the possibility of partial honors offerings in each high school. Others were selection of students for the honors program, and concern about loss of capable students from other high schools.

One of the procedures used following interviews was to provide a composite summary to all who were interviewed. This was done with trustees, central office administrators, Archbishop MacDonald High School staff members, and the principals of the other high schools. Another procedurae was close liaison (three meetings) with personnel from a Department of Education school evaluation team which was evaluating the whole school.

Evidence was presented indicating that stakeholder groups wanted the honors program to continue, particularly the students in attendance and their parents. Suggestions were made about partial honors programs in other high schools, particularly the appropriate conditions which should apply. The matter of selection of students received special attention.

During the evaluation a number of meetings and representations about the honors program took place. This is as it should be in a formative evaluation, and changes were, indeed, occurring. The attention given to the matter by sincere and interested persons, both lay and professional, was most commendable. While not part of the evaluation, these activities were considered by some people to be a natural outgrowth.

The following findings and recommendations were produced.

FINDINGS

1. The program offered at Archbishop MacDonald High School was perceived to be different by the members of its staff, by the students and by the parents, and to a lesser degree,

by staff members in other high schools.

2. The special program at Archbishop MacDonald High School was being delivered largely as planned.

3. The honors program at Archbishop MacDonald High School was being developed as more experience accumulated.

4. The honors program at Archbaishop MacDonald High School was serving an identifiable group of students who were happy with the program.

5. Students invited to enroll in the honors program at Archbishop MacDonald High School but did not do so were happy with their progress in their neighborhood schools.

6. Selection procedures were generally successful but tended to be somewhat cumbersome and inefficient.

7. There was considerable misunderstanding and perhaps mistrust of the Archbishop MacDonald High School honors program existing in the other high schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The honors program offered at Archbishop MacDonald High School should be continued.

2. Selection procedures should be studied further with a view to making them simpler and more valid.

3. High schools other than Archbishop MacDonald should be permitted to offer some honors courses if they so desire. This should be done so as to take into account the interests and abilities of the school staffs, and should be organized so that each school has at least one honors course with a strong verbal component (eg. language, literature, social studies, French) and one with a strong quantitative or scientific component (eg. mathematics, chemistry, physics).

4. The term "honors course" should have a common meaning for students and parents in the system. This requires some system uniformity but not necessarily identity.

5. There should be cooperation among the high schools with respect to honors courses. All the high schools should be given the opportunity of giving input to the honors courses, wherever they may be taught. There might be systematic exchange of teachers between Archbishop MacDonald High School and other high schools to assist in establishing honors courses in these schools. This would also facilitate input by all teachers interested in honors courses.

6. Junior high school principals should be given more informa-

tion with respect to the honors program at Archbishop MacDonald High School with a view to helping them select the students best suited to the program.

7. Designated members of the central office staff should be more directly involved in the development of the honors courses and of the selection procedures in order to protect the interests of students and parents in the system.

8. Archbishop MacDonald High School should continue to offer matriculation-level courses in addition to the honors courses. Without this provision, the availability of a partial honors program for some students would be jeopardized.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many people cooperated in this evaluation of the honors program at Archbishop MacDonald High School. Dr. Clarence Rhodes, Education Consultant, Alberta Education, provided assistance from the first stage of planning the project to the final stage of reviewing the draft reports.

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Mr. William Hart, Superintendent of Student Services
Mr. Len Hanak, Area Superintendent
Mr. Don Delaney, Consultant for Gifted Education

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The principal of Archbishop MacDonald High School, Mr. Al Barlage, and his staff, made a very significant contribution. An interview with the principal of Old Scona High School in the Edmonton public school system, Mr. Mike Demaine, was very helpful in providing information that permitted comparisons.

The junior high school principals, vice principals, school counsellors and Grade IX teachers of Language Arts, Social Studies, Mathematics, and Science, completed a questionnaire used in gathering opinions. Their splendid cooperation was most appreciated.

The principals, listed below, of the other high schools in the system were each interviewed, and were most helpful in arranging the cooperation of students who were part of the study.

Mr. Mel Niebrugge, Archbishop O'Leary High School
Mr. Ray Campbell, Austin O'Brien High School
Mrs. Cec Winton, Holy Trinity High School
Mr. Len Rousseau, J.H. Picard High School
Mr. Ernie Turnbull, Louis St. Laurent High School
Mr. Al Hiebert, St. Joseph High School
Mr. Tony Caruk, St. Francis Xavier High School

Students who had been invited to attend the honors program and their parents made an important contribution through interviews and questionnaires.

The help of all of the contributors is gratefully acknowledged.

S.C.T. Clarke
V.R. Nyberg

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

The Edmonton Roman Catholic Separate School District # 7 is located in the City of Edmonton. In September, 1984, the district had eight high schools providing Grade X education for graduates from among 2013 grade IX pupils in 29 schools. Demographic factors had caused enrollment in Archbishop MacDonald High School to drop. Commencing about 1980 this school began to evolve in the direction of an "academic high school." By 1984 the program included university entrance (matriculation), an honors program which also provided matriculation, and the first stages of the International Baccalaureate program.

In 1983 it was proposed that the honors program in Archbishop MacDonald High School be evaluated, since, in the 1984-85 school year, it would be some four years old. In addition, this high school differed from others in the system in that it drew students from the whole district. In 1984 arrangements had been completed to have this study carried out by a team of evaluators external to the system. The project, funded by Alberta Education, was part of a larger scheme to study provisions being made for gifted pupils in four school systems.

During the evaluation of the honors program a school evaluation was made, at the request of the school system, by Alberta Education. The on-site visit took place in April, 1985. Plans were made to coordinate these two evaluations.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Like the program at Archbishop MacDonald High School, the purpose of the study evolved. Following Stake's Countenance Model (outlined in Appendix 2), the purpose was first to ascertain the goals and objectives at the system and at the school level. Then it was necessary to decide what data were required, to collect these data, and to determine the extent to which the goals and objectives were being attained. This thread of purpose continued to run through the study, but it was refined as time went on.

It soon became clear that for many parents and students an important goal or objective was attendance at a school which provided an academic atmosphere. Students wished to be approved for excellence in academic achievement, or negatively, to escape peer pressure characterized by the label "a brain." There seemed to be no doubt that neighborhood high schools could provide excellent academic programs. The perceived problem lay in the area of academic atmosphere associated with each school.

Other stakeholders (Guba's term, see Appendix 2) had other goals and objectives. As the evaluation proceeded, it became clear

that the issues, problems and concerns of various groups should be addressed as far as was possible.

1.3 METHOD OF THE STUDY

1.3.1 Evaluation Model.

The general procedure employed was similar to that advocated in Stake's Responsive Model (see appendix 2). This uses personal observations (interviews) to ascertain purposes, and information needed to deal with or respond to the issues, problems or concerns. Another feature of the responsive model is careful selection of the issues, problems and concerns to be reported on, and different reports to different groups. Some of these procedures were used in the present study. It should be noted that Stake holds that the Countenance Model and the Responsive Model are compatible or that both can be used at the same time.

1.3.2 Data Sources

Input was sought by way of interviews with all members of the School Board, with a number of affected administrators, with part of the staff of Archbishop MacDonald High School, with a ten percent sample of students who enrolled in the honors program at Archbishop MacDonald High School in September, 1984, and their parents, with a ten percent sample of students invited to enrol who did not, and their parents.

Based on the interviews with parents and students, a questionnaire was constructed for all parents and students involved with the honors program. It dealt with reasons for attending or not attending, who made the decision, and opinions about the honors program. The last part of this questionnaire was used to gather opinions about the honors program from junior high school principals, vice-principals, school counsellors, and Grade IX teachers of English, Social Studies, Mathematics and Science.

School marks for first semester or end of first term subjects were obtained for both students who were in Grade X in the honors program, and for those invited who did not in fact enroll.

School record data, particularly Renzulli-type ratings, were obtained from the school. A summary self evaluation of the honors program was completed by the principal, under these headings: origin, goals and objectives, recruitment and selection of students, description of the honors program, progress of the 1983-84 Grade XI and Grade XII students, special outcomes of the program, resources, relationships, strengths and weaknesses. This self evaluation proved to be a valuable source of data.

The end of first semester marks, or in the non-semestered high schools, the mid-term marks, were secured for all of the students who, in the pring of 1984, had been invited to attend the honors program at Archbishop MacDonald High School.

CHAPTER 2

COLLECTING THE DATA

2.1 INTERVIEWS

2.1.1 General Procedures

Unstructured or non-directive procedures were used, based on one or a very few broad questions. The interviewer openly took notes, and on some occasions was clearly attempting to record word for word what was said. Periodically throughout the interview, or else once at the end, the interview record was handed to the interviewee to read, or was read to him/her. It was explained that what the person really meant was sought, and corrections, if required, were invited. It was also explained that quotations, not attributed by name to a person, might be used to illustrate the final report.

An appointment made in advance specified the time and place of the interview, which was at the convenience of the person being interviewed.

2.1.2 Interviews with Trustees

Each of the seven trustee was interviewed. Three basic questions were posed, in this order:

1. What is your concept of giftedness?

2. What is the school's responsibility for the education of the gifted?

3. What are the issues, problems, or concerns you perceive?

The interview records were analyzed and summarized. Quotations were used as illustrations, but names of persons who made the statements were not appended. After being cleared by the superintendent, a copy of the interview summary was sent to each of the trustees.

2.1.3 Interviews with Central Office Administrators

Each of the five central office administrators most closely associated with the honors program in operation at Archbishop MacDonald High School was interviewed. The questions asked and procedures used were as described in the previous section, 2.1.2.

2.1.4 Interviews with Parents

Interviews were conducted with a randomly chosen ten percent sample of parents of students attending the honors program (nine parents) and also with a randomly chosen ten percent sample of parents of students invited to attend the honors program but who

did not attend (24 parents). There were three basic questions.

1. What were the reasons for the decision?

2. Who made the decision?

3. What, if any, were their views about the honors program at Archbishop MacDonald High School?

Some parents elaborated at length on the reasons, and so provided a good deal of information related to satisfaction. If this did not take place, further queries designed to elaborate this were made, such as any vocational plans for the future, whether the student had "time to live," and whether the student was working hard, and was happy.

2.1.5 Interviews with Students

Interviews were conducted with the children of the parents interviewed. Students who had enrolled in the honors program at Archbishop MacDonald High School were interviewed at the school. There were nine students so interviewed. The other group consisted of students who had been invited to attend the honors program but had declined, and whose parents had been interviewed. The same basic questions were asked as were posed to the parents.

1. What were the reasons for the decision?

2. Who made the decision?

3. Suppose you had a friend who, like you, had received an invitation to attend the honors program at Archbishop MacDonald High School, what advice would you give to him or her?

2.1.6 Interviews with Staff of Archbishop MacDonald High School

The group interviewed consisted of all the administrators (including department heads), the school counsellor, and a sample of the teachers (12 out of a staff of 24). The procedure used was the same as that described in section 2.1.1. The matters raised were as follows:

1. Tell me about the honors program in Archbishop MacDonald High School. How does an honors course differ from a matriculation course?

2. What do you perceive to be issues, problems or concerns?

3. Tell me about the relationships between the school and the school system.

Because of time constraints, each interview was scheduled for 30 minutes.

2.1.7 Interviews with Principals of Other High Schools

There were seven other high schools in the system. Each principal was interviewed. In one school, assistant principals were also present. The procedures used were as described in section 2.1.1. The matters raised were as follows:

1. What is your concept of the honors program at Archbishop MacDonald High School?

2. What are your views regarding this program?

2.2 QUESTIONNAIRES

Based chiefly on the interviews with parents, with some attention to interviews with other groups, a questionnaire was constructed designed for parents, students, trustees, and staff members of junior high schools. Three parts were included: reasons for choosing the high school being attended, who made the choice, and opinions about the honors program in Archbishop MacDonald High School. This latter part, only, was used for trustees and staff in junior high schools. All of the items were the same across groups except for minor modifications needed to suit each group. While this created some difficulties it was felt that comparability of results from the various stakeholder groups outweighed the difficulties.

2.3 RATING SCALES

Modified Renzulli et al scales had been used for each student who had decided, in the spring of 1984, to enrol, see Appendix 1. These "Behavioral Characteristics Rating Questionnaires" covered three areas: learning characteristics (8 items), motivational characteristics (9 items), creativity characteristics (10 items), and leadership characteristics (10 items). The total number of items was 37. Each student was rated by parent, teacher, and self for an overall total of 111 items. A random sample of student rating packets was analysed for purposes of estimating the reliability of each rating scale and of the combined scales.

2.4 SCHOOL MARKS

For each student who had been invited in the spring of 1984 to attend the honors program at Archbishop MacDonald High School, the end of semester school marks or midterm marks in non-semestered courses were secured.

2.5 ATTITUDE SCALES

Grade X students in the honors program at Archbishop MacDonald High School, as well as other Grade X students invited to enroll in this program but did not do so were asked to complete to attitude scales. The School Subjects Attitude Scales, although intended to assess attitudes toward specific school subjects, was

administered to measure attitude toward Grade X in the school being attended. This instruments produced three scores: evaluative, or the degree to which a student likes or dislikes Grade X, usefulness, and difficulty.

The Attitudes Toward the World of Work was also administered to these same Grade X students. This instrument produces 15 scores, as follows:

Preparation by School	Interest and Variability in Jobs
Diligence	Laziness
Job Security	Positive Employer Characteristics
Independence	Money
Ambition	Locus of Control
Confidence in Succeeding	Negative Employer Characteristics
Social Relations	Attitudes Towards Unemployment
General Attitudes Towards Earning a Living	

CHAPTER 3

OBSERVATIONS

3.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF ARCHBISHOP MacDonald HIGH SCHOOL

3.1.1 Historical Perspective

Archbishop MacDonald High School, located at 10810 - 142 Street in Edmonton, commenced operation in 1967. Enrollment peaked at about 700 students in the year 1977 and then fell off. General population decline and changes in the neighborhood contributed to continued decline in enrollment, which, in the year 1980-81 reached 518. Discussion at the time is reported to have centred on two possibilities: close the school and use the building to house central office administration; or develop it into a "magnet" or specialized school. In the year 1976-77 the Edmonton Public School Board had designated "Old Scona" as a magnet academic school, which would accept students from anywhere in the school district. By 1980, three public schools offered the International Baccalaureate program. These moves to provide programs for academically capable students were in vogue at the time. The most recent Old Scona Academic High School brochure, addressed to students, states:

> If you want to attend school with those who respect, desire and support learning, think about Old Scona.

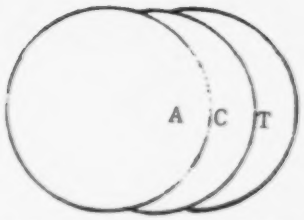
On more than one occasion system administrators and school-based administrators attended workshops, visited other schools, and obtained first hand information and views about provisions for academically capable students elsewhere.

3.1.2 Origin of Honors Program

In the spring of 1981 the Edmonton Catholic School Board authorized Archbishop MacDonald High School to establish an alternative high school program for academically capable students. The term "honors program" was used. It was decided to delay inauguration of the International Baccalaureate program.

Initially the honors program was restricted to Grade X and to five subjects only - English, Mathematics, Chemistry, Biology and Religion. In 1983 authorization to extend this program to eight subjects, and to Grades XI and XII was granted. Also, the inauguration of the I.B. program was approved, to commence in 1984. In the meantime, the school's application to offer the I.B. had been approved by the authorities in Geneva.

Early in 1983 a discussion paper was prepared entitled "Project ACT." The three components were: academic excellence, Christianity in action, and technological literacy (computers). A diagram is shown below. The paper presented the philosophical basis for an alternative school, spelled out each of the three com-



ponents, and provided considerable detail. The special advantages of a small high school were set forth. The prime mover in the preparation of this document appeared to be F. P. O'Hara, then area superintendent. It has, to a considerable extent, influenced the direction in which the system and school has moved. In the absence of a statement of goals or objectives, this document at least in part delineates these. It speaks of the creation of "an ambience or orientation attractive to academically motivated students who wish to prepare themselves for university or college." The reader will note a similar sentiment in the statement from the Old Scona brochure quoted in section 3.1.1. Project ACT also elaborates on an added emphasis on "the gospel message and the communication of this message to students, staff and parents" which stresses, among other things, calling upon students to "lead a life of service to others."

3.1.3 Staff and Students

As of 1984-85 there was a teaching staff of 24 which included the principal and two assistant principals. Student enrollment in Grade X in January, 1985, totalled 207, broken down as follows: Honors - 97, Partial Honors - 50, Matriculation - 60. The corresponding figures for Grade XI were 38, 18, and 57, with 14 full and 2 partial in the I.B. program. For Grade XII the figures were 20, 2, and 75, with no students yet in the IB program. Recruitment, screening and selection were focussed on the move from Grade IX (in 29 schools) to Grade X. During the evaluation the guidelines were the subject of animated debate that produced considerable change.

Table 3.1 sets forth some of the characteristics of the 303 students who were invited, in the spring of 1984, to enrol in the honors program at Archbishop MacDonald High School. Of these, 94 (about one third) actually enrolled. The sex distribution was close to that found in the general population. Of the 303 students invited to enrol there was a preponderance of girls - 165 to 138 boys. In all, of the 303 students invited to enroll about two thirds did not do so, for various reasons. The main ones were: the neighborhood school was entirely satisfactory; it was close by; friends were attending the neighborhood school; and it was a family tradition to attend.

TABLE 3.1

BREAKDOWN OF STUDENTS INVITED TO ENROL IN THE ARCHBISHOP MACDONALD HONORS PROGRAM

Grade IX students invited in spring, 1984, to enrol	303
Students who enrolled in honors program in Grade X	94
Invited students NOT enrolled in honors program	
Archbishop MacDonald (matric program)	9
Archbishop O'Leary	50
Austin O'Brien	20
Holy Trinity	13
J.H. Picard	16
Louis St. Laurent	33
St. Francis Xavier	26
St. Joseph	21
Students not in the Catholic school system	21
Total of invited students NOT enrolled in honors program	209
Males enrolled in honors program	45
Females enrolled in honors program	49
Invited males NOT enrolled in honors program	93
Invited females NOT enrolled in honors program	116

3.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE HONORS PROGRAM

3.2.1 Goals and Objectives

An honors program must first meet the goals and objectives set by Alberta Education, then those set by the school system, and finally those set by the school. Alberta Education has no goals and objectives made specifically for an honors program, nor does the Edmonton Catholic School System; however, many of the statements made by each authority can be interpreted in terms of such a special program.

Some of the Goals of Schooling set forth by Alberta Education relate directly to an honors program. The most obvious ones are:

* Acquire knowledge and develop skills, attitudes and habits which contribute to physical, mental and social well-being.

  This statement could be interpreted to mean that bright, highly motivated students will be better off in a program geared to their special traits.

* Acquire knowledge and develop skills, attitudes, and habits required to respond to the opportunities and expectations of the world of work.

  The world of work needs people who have the special traits expected of students in an honors program.

* In working toward the attainment of its goals, the school will strive for excellence. However, the degree of individual achievement also depends on student ability and motivation as well as support from home.

  A program that sets high expectations for students of high ability and motivation (such as an honors program) is consistent with this statement.

The Goals of Schooling has several statements also that seem especially applicable to an honors program. For example:

* Develop self-discipline, self understanding, and a positive self-concept through realistic appraisal of one's capabilities and limitations.

  An honors program that strives to make bright and motivated students aware of their abilities and to teach them to come to terms with these traits is quite in keeping with this statement.

* Develop a sense of purpose in life and ethical or spiritual values which respect the worth of the individual, justice, fair play and fundamental rights, responsibilities and freedoms.

  This development depends a great deal on the ability level of the students. It follows that students in an honors program might pursue this goal at a higher level of understanding than might the average students.

* The ultimate aim of education is to develop the abilities of individuals in order that they might fulfill their personal aspirations while making a positive contribution to society.

  An honors program is quite clearly in harmony with this goal statement.

Aims and objectives formulated by the Edmonton Catholic School

System generally present Alberta Education's statements and place them in a Catholic context with an occasional addition of specific detail. Examples are given below:

* Catholic schools, as agents of Catholic parents, have the responsibility to help all children to develop their unique individual capabilities to learn and to live, and thereby experience humanity and the world as created by God and redeemed by Jesus Christ.

* Catholic schools will strive for excellence in education for all students to develop their academic and interpersonal skills. In this way, students will be prepared to use their God-given talents to live and work effectively in society.

* Catholic schools will foster the mental and physical well--being of all students through:
  - appropriate programs which emphasize physical, aesthetical and leisure activities.
  - a respect for the worth and dignity of the individual.

All of these statements follow directly from statements of goals and objectives provided by Alberta Education.

The school, in this case Archbishop MacDonald High School, must face the task of adapting the goals and objectives handed down by the higher authorities. This is done by adding specific objectives that can readily be translated into school and classroom procedures. Here are a few examples:

* Programs offered at our school enable students to obtain a high school diploma with University entrance standing. As well the courses offered meet the requirements of N.A.I.T., junior colleges, or entry into direct employment.

  While an honors program attempts to develop students in special ways, the various channels to post-secondary education must be kept open.

* The school is involved in a Wednesday p.m. Multi-Activity Program allowing students to pursue their interests through mentorship, career exploration, service, and life experience activities. Out-of-school or community resources act as motivators and in addition they provide real life models for students. Thus curricula are enriched and student learning is broadened.

* Courses in grade 10, 11, and 12 will enable students to become proficient in the language and operation of computers.

* Visitors have commented on the friendliness of the students, the presence of a positive learning environment and the favorable overall appearance of the school. The school strives to achieve a scholarly approach, which involves diversity

(knowing more about all things) and divergent thinking. In part, this is promoted by students helping students, a practice which is encouraged and developed.

* Develop independent or self-directed study skills such as skills of research and problem solving. Thus, subject matter is internalized, parallels between subjects are developed, and interdisciplinary study is promoted.

These statements, which are direct or indirect statements of goals and objectives, are consistent with statements by Alberta Education and with the Edmonton Catholic System. The school objectives were not written out as such but were derived from documents and comments which appeared to have some consensus.

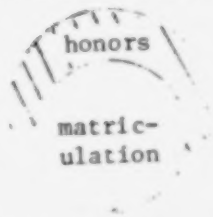
3.2.2 Elements of the Honors Program

* Characteristics of Students

Students capable of honors work must be able to learn quickly and easily, as stated in the definition (section 3.2.3). They need, and can cope with, a challenge. They are able to operate effectively in the higher levels of educational goals in the cognitive domain (as defined in Bloom's Taxonomy), and in the affective domain (as defined in Krathwohl's Taxonomy).

* Matriculation Requirement

An honors program must satisfy the broad goals of education as set forth by Alberta Education. In addition, it must provide university entrance (matriculation) for those who wish to qualify; however, it must offer more than the matriculation requirements by way of depth of treatment as well as of topics covered. This is illustrated by the Venn diagram shown at the left. Teachers are familiar with the matriculation program. It is the additional part which is less familiar. This part is shaded in the diagram.



The curriculum for the matriculation program courses is the take-off point for honors work. It must be covered thoroughly because honors students, like all other students, must write standard Departmental examinations. Marks on these examinations make a major contribution when it comes to selecting students for prizes, awards, admission to quota faculties and the like.

* Pacing

Honors students learn quickly and easily therefore the matriculation program can be covered in less time than is re-

quired for other students. The time thus saved is used to provide the challenge the honors students need and want.

* Honors Program Extras

The time saved by the more rapid pacing of the curriculum in the honors program is, in general, used in several ways.

1. Extensions of the matriculation curriculum, such as interdisciplinary work to integrate all subjects; e.g. symmetry in art, biology, English, social studies, etc. The interdisciplinary emphasis helps correct fragmented or compartmentalized knowledge, and promotes real understanding and internalization.

2. Greater depth in treatment of matriculation topics.

3. Challenging assignments.

4. Moving out of the school environment to utilize superior community resources. Thus, real life experience and real life situations are encountered, and educational experiences go beyond those that are merely bookish.

The illustration and explanation of these features of an honors program is best done subject by subject, and in detail. This could easily be the substance of whole books.

* Teaching

Good teaching takes place in honors courses, in matriculation courses, and in general courses. The mix of procedures differs. In reading descriptions of teaching at the honors level a common reaction of teachers is that what is being described is just what any good teaching is. That is true, but the mix is different.

There is much more discussion, and it is at a high level. For example: "At the time of the French revolution, in neighboring Spain the peasants were more oppressed, the monarch and nobles were more vicious, and in general conditions were worse than they were in France. Why was there a French revolution but not a Spanish revolution?"

There is less exposition or instruction. There is more deliberate attempt to have more teaching directed at analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (as defined in Bloom's Taxonomy).

Particularly in the sciences, there is much learning by discovery.

The assignments given are much more challenging. There is much more in-depth learning in student-selected topics. This helps to accommodate different learning styles.

Communications skills are developed and used, particularly listening, analysing, contributing ideas, differing without offense, and the like. In this way, students learn to learn from each other.

Teachers say that teaching an honors course is much more exhausting. It is hard work, but more than hard work. It calls for an extensive and intimate knowledge of the subject. It requires intense concentration.

As with the honors program extras described in the preceding section, the illustration and explanation of teaching in an honors program require much more than the brief comments provide here. It should be the subject of papers, videotapes and inservice education.

* Evaluation

Evaluation implies comparison with standards. High school marks are used for scholarships, university entrance (regular and quota faculties), and the like. To use the average performance of an honors class as the standard for school marks is to do the students a disservice relative to the performance of regular students. One way of ameliorating the inequities is to have a two-tier system of marking. This involves some assumptions, and requires careful interpretation. In general, raw scores on appropriate tests compare the honors students with each other. To compare them with regular matriculation students the average is moved up (say one standard deviation) and the transformed scores are distributed around this new average.

* Academic Atmosphere

Academically capable students who enrol in the honors program at Archbishop MacDonald High School want and need challenge. They want and need an atmosphere where scholarship is respected. They want peers who accept and even value excellence in academic achievement. They want an academic atmosphere.

Such an atmosphere does not preclude experiences and development in the physical, social and spiritual spheres. But development in these spheres should not jeopardize an academic atmosphere.

3.2.3 Definition of an Honors Program

A high school honors program challenges students who can learn quickly and easily. It provides an academic atmosphere where excellence in academic achievement is approved. It covers the regular high school matriculation program thoroughly, and in less time than that required for other students. The time saved is

used to develop certain aspects of the curriculum in greater depth, and to deal with ancillary aspects. The teaching procedures involve a high proportion of activities devoted to eliciting student participation, to developing higher levels of thought process, to stimulating curiosity, and in general to challenging the minds and hearts of the students. School based evaluation of student progress takes into account the extra high-level learning which has occurred.

3.2.4 Selection Procedures

Selection procedures for the Archbishop MacDonald honors program at the Grade X level in September, 1984, involved four distinct steps. The first was to draw up a list, from the computer files, of all Grade IX students whose IQ was in the order of 120 or higher. Most, but not all, of the students had taken the Lorge Thorndike test of mental ability at the beginning of Grade IX, that is, in the fall of 1983. Step one was carried out in early spring, 1984.

The next step was to break down the list by junior high school, and send the resulting lists to the principals. The principals, in conference with the teachers, added names of students to the list, usually high achievers. In cases where the computer list included names of students who seemed to be weak candidates for an honors program, deletions were made.

The third step was to contact all of the students on the final list, and invite them to apply for entry into the honors program. The application form (see Appendix 1) asked the student to rate himself/herself in four areas: learning characteristics, motivational characteristics, creativity characteristics and leadership characteristics. The parents also filled out forms covering these four areas, and in addition the junior high school also completed a set of these form for each student. Each set of forms contained provisions for comments. The students were asked to indicate their reasons for seeking admission to the honors program; parents were merely asked for "Parent Comments (if any);" and junior high school principals were asked to give "a brief and frank assessment of the applicant." The most important aspect of this step was the self selection. Students not interested in the program did not complete the forms and were therefore not considered further. The final step, conducted at Archbishop MacDonald High School, was to make the selection from the forms submitted. The selection actually did not involve turning away any of the applicants; rather it consisted of assigning students, on the basis of the information in the forms, to a full honors program, a partial honors program, or to a regular matriculation program. As the term implies, a partial honors program was one in which a student took one or more subjects, but not the complete set, with the honors group, and the remaining subjects with the matriculation group. Most of the students were enrolled in a full honors program, but there was a substantial number in the other two groups as well. Only a few students were enrolled in

the matriculation program without doing any course work at the honors level.

As one might expect, several students who applied and were accepted, for one reason or another, did not attend Archbishop MacDonald High School. The most common reason for the change in plans was the difficulty in getting to the school, as compared to the relative ease of attending the local high school.

3.3 STAKEHOLDER VIEWS AND INTENTS

3.3.1 Trustees

The interviews with trustees revealed considerable consensus among members of the school board on the nature of giftedness. This composite statement is probably representative:

> Giftedness is any set of talents that goes beyond normal limits or expectations. There are many kinds of giftedness: all around, for example, an honors student; some are gifted in one particular area, for example, mathematics but not necessarily in other subjects; others are not gifted academically but in fine arts; still others are gifted in athletics.

There was complete agreement that the gifted, like any other children, should have potential developed as fully as possible, and that the school system has a responsibility to provide for this. One trustee put it this way:

> The schools' responsibility is to recognize giftedness, and then to nurture it within the system's constraints of resources to do so.

Some trustees added a caveat: that the school does not have the sole responsibility for developing the talents of the gifted.

On the matter of who benefitted, all recognized that while both the individual and society benefit, society was the chief beneficiary. The main issue identified was mainstreaming or special programs. Various pros and cons were enuciated. Four are summarized below.

* I am not convinced we need a school devoted to academic excellence. Each school should try to develop it.
* If necessary, the school system must set up a special program.
* I favor normal interaction in a normal school but there can be special programs.
* The system should have an alternative such as Archbishop

> MacDonald for parents to choose from; but should gifted children be in Archbishop MacDonald or in their neighborhood schools?

Other concerns or problems included the need for inservice, resource allocation, siphoning off the brightest students leaving other schools at a disadvantage, elitism, the system isn't doing enough for the gifted, obtaining parental involvement, the paucity of provisions for the gifted, and the need for the gifted to learn to cope in a normal society.

3.3.2 System Administrators

Five administrators were interviewed. On the nature of giftedness, terminology was a concern to some; for example, a child with gifts versus giftedness, and avoidance of the use of the term "gifted." A statement which covered many of the ideas expressed about the nature of giftedness follows.

> In the school context, giftedness is the ability to learn at an extremely rapid rate, to retain that learning, and to apply it in different situations. Identification in schools would include achievement, measured intellectual capacity, and special talents such as art, writing, and mathematics.

There was general agreement with this enunciation of the schools' responsibility:

> We have equal responsibility to meet the unique needs of the gifted child as we have to meet the needs of any other child.

The issues, problems and concerns centred about the challenge to the composite high school philosophy implicit in a specialized magnet school. Another concern was the need for clear criteria for the target population and for making selections. The selection, allocation, and inservice education of teachers was an additional concern.

3.3.3 Parent - Student

Because the questionnaires were developed from the interviews, in a real sense the responses to them provide the views of the important stakeholders. However, in the following account, selected quotations enable them to speak for themselves (appendices 3 and 4 gives more detail). A ten percent sample of Grade X students enrolled in the honors program at Archbishop MacDonald High School, and their parents, were interviewed. This applied also to students invited to enrol, but declined, and their parents.

<u>Parents - Students, Enrolled</u>

The main theme of the parents and students was the challenge of

an academic atmosphere where high academic achievement was expected and was approved by peers. Here are excerpts from one parent-child set of interviews.

> Father I came from Poland twenty years ago. Cannot now speak good English. I am a little old fashioned. I like to keep my two daughters home and busy. Otherwise, they go around and you never know.
> Daughter I wanted the challenge in classes. I wanted to learn more. I found it challenging -- stopped taking piano lessons because I have so much homework. The teachers are friendly. The students are super. It is just a great place.

These quotations are typical in that of the nine parent-child pairs interviewed in the random sample only three had Anglo-Saxon names. The father quoted expressed a common Old World view: hard work is the key to success. The daughter's reaction also was typical: it is tough, but interesting and good for me.

Another parent-child pair of views, again from a parent with a non-Anglo-Saxon name, follows.

> Mother I didn't know anything about Archbishop MacDonald High School. I just took the word of the local Junior High. Through all grade school and Junior High, when she entered Archbishop MacDonald I've never seen her happier.
> Daughter I enrolled in the honors program for the challenge because I was falling asleep in my classes in Junior High. At Archbishop MacDonald it is more academic. Everyone here is very friendly. It is easy to make friends. I am happier than I have ever been. I am looking forward to next semester and next year.

The next rather lengthy quotations are from a parent-child with an Anglo-Saxon name. They express some thoughtful limitations, doubts, or caveats.

> Mother Both my husband and I tried to discourage her, but she was very frustrated in Junior High and really wanted to go. Her marks are not as good as they would have been in the neighboring high school but she feels the challenge and is happier. I expected that she would be spending hours doing homework but that isn't the case. She has time to live. She doesn't strive to make 100's, but is conscientious and puts work first. Archbishop MacDonald is a good school. It is doing what our daughter wants, but not all capable students should go there.
> Daughter Last year in Junior High a lot of stuff I was taking was too easy. Some teachers weren't able to control the class. I wanted a challenge - wanted to be in an environment where everybody wanted to learn, came to school because they wanted to not because they were forced. I expected the honors program to be a lot harder, and my marks would go lower. I am really proud of my marks. I think

> they are great. I am satisfied with them because I know I have learned something - get something out of it. I do an hour or two of homework every night but am able to keep up with ballet and tap dancing, piano, and youth group work. But you have to get used to leaving your friends behind and making new ones. I don't regret coming here. It is just great!

Parents - Students, Invited but not Enrolled

There were several themes expressed in the interviews. Friends, distance, and family tradition of attendance at a neighboring high school were the chief reasons given for not accepting the invitation to enrol in the honors program at Archbishop MacDonald High School. In addition, some wanted all-round development academically, socially, physically, emotionally, rather than undue emphasis on the first. A number of parents expressed fear of peer pressure against high academic achievement or more positively, wished for an academic atmosphere. The influence of friends, distance, and family tradition are all illustrated in this quotation.

> Mother He has to take two buses to get to the nearest high school. Archbishop MacDonald is that much farther. He has friends here, plays hockey. All of our other three children went here.
> Son Most of my friends are here. It is a family tradition. It is a bigger school, there are more new people to meet, more activities. I heard good things about it. Being closer, I don't have to get up so early.

These overriding factors probably account for less than one third of those invited actually enrolling in the full honors program at Archbishop MacDonald High School. Friends, distance, family tradition, will always operate. There are however, many other nuances.

> Mother She wanted to go to the neighboring high school because all her friends went there. She lost a lot of friends, especially boys, because she makes better marks. She is looking to see if the boys are looking. One of her boyfriends looked at her midterm marks and said "When I see marks like these it gives me a nosebleed." That discourages her. She used to try to get lower marks but I said that was silly.
> Daughter When I was in Grade IX everyone thought Mac was a brain school - keep away from it. But from what I hear now it is not. My friend is happy there.

The example of peer pressure for conformity in academic achievement is typical of several others, in all cases given by parents. Following is a frank expression by a student to the effect that doing well isn't everything.

> Father Taking kids out and putting them in one school it helps them by expectation so they study more.
> Daughter I wasn't doing all that well last year and was surprised to be invited to enrol. With my marks I wouldn't fit into an honors program. Maybe I'm satisfied as is. I'm not too ambitious. To pass, I don't have to study. An honors program would take a lot of work.

The theme of "live life now, don't want to work too hard, didn't think I could do that difficult work" was expressed by several students. Another expression of the wish for well-rounded development is provided by both mother and daughter.

> Mother An academic honors program and considerable involvement in sports would be too heavy. Being a student isn't everything. She wants to socialize too, and Archbishop MacDonald was too far away, and probably too hard.
> Daughter Most of my friends are here. It is a small school. I like the sports and teams. Archbishop MacDonald is too far away. I didn't like the idea of getting up early. You can get everything you really need here. I like it here.

3.3.4 Staff Members, Archbishop MacDonald High School

The principal, assistant principals, counselor, and department heads were interviewed - twelve out of a staff of twenty-four. The academic atmosphere was a major theme, well expressed by one teacher.

> The honors program creates an atmosphere for students who really want to get involved in their studies, really want to learn, in contrast to those who come to school because it is warm in the winter time. Students are beginning to feel they are part of something that is different - maybe like a private school?

The rationale for what the school was trying to do was stated by another teacher this way:

> At least the realization is here that the gifted have to be challenged, otherwise society loses. This is the essence of the importance of the program. It fills a void, satisfies a need, serves society, and takes care of the gifted (who are not always highly motivated).

Staff members perceived the honors program to be theirs; something they developed, something which took hard work and a willingness to try new procedures. They were proud of it. They were convinced it was good for outstanding students and good for society.

> An in-depth diversification of curriculum in tested material suitable for the honors program began to jell about 1982-83. It was a developmental, experimental approach.

The consensus was that teaching in the honors program can be most rewarding provided the teacher is prepared to rethink, redo, and reform established teaching procedures.

> It has been a lot of work. It is no snap teaching in an honors program. You have to redirect your teaching style. It requires a lot more preparation for classes. Instead of having one or two students come at the end of class, half the class comes to ask questions, and the questions they ask are much more searching.

The rewarding aspects were illustrated in such statements as,"The honors students are just an absolute pleasure to teach."

The chief among the issues, problems, or concerns expressed was the relationships with other high schools.

* Other high schools see us as a threat. They would like to see us closed.

* It is a real concern that some colleagues in other schools don't really know what we are doing.

These were but two expressions of the feeling of being misunderstood.

A second common theme was marking, evaluation, promotion, especially the mark transformation procedures of the two-tier marking system. Other concerns were the effects of segregation, the Wednesday afternoon program, selection procedures, crowding out options, and extra-curricular activities.

3.3.5 Principals of Other High Schools

None of the principals expressed opposition to the idea of an honors program. Many stated various conditions or restrictions or necessary changes. Two views are quoted.

* The honors program is very necessary and serves a function in the system.

* I am prepared to go along with the concept of an honors program but for a very select group. Any high school which wants to, and has the clientele, should be able to offer honors courses.

There was no clear perception of the honors program at Archbishop MacDonald High School. It is probable that each principal would accept the idea that the honors program must cover the matriculation program thoroughly, and then do more.

> An honors program should challenge students to do more than the regular matriculation curriculum calls for. All the bright kids in class, each making over 80%, isn't an honors

program. After mastering the core curriculum, students should branch out and do some supplementary aspects of the course. There is need for more individual work such as CAI, research projects, challenging assignments, and in-depth studies which arrive at conclusions.

The "doing more" is further spelled out in this statement:

> An honors program must challenge by more searching techniques of questioning, more difficult assignments, and teacher thought and vocabulary must be at a higher level.

There were a number of issues, problems, and concerns expressed by the principals.

1. Loss of capable students

   The idea expressed was that if too many capable students are taken away it will injure the school. "Destroying the rest of us" was a term used by one principal, "creaming off the cream" by another. The idea was well put by one principal:

   > All schools have pride. No school wants to lose its brilliant people. They are the ones who bring honor to the school. We like to have bright students.

2. Perceived implication that teachers in other high schools are not as capable as they should be.

3. Elitism

   The concern over elitism was that some students will get the idea that they are "special", superior, and will also not learn to live and work with "ordinary" students.

4. Target group

   The boundaries or limits of the "honors" group was a matter of concern. Suppose its size reaches 600 to 700 students? Most of the more capable students would then be in Archbishop MacDonald High School. Several principals expressed the view that if the program were restricted to the truly honors students it would be much more acceptable. The idea was that the annual intake might be more like a hundred to a hundred and fifty.

5. Selection procedures or admission policy

   Several principals had horror stories about students who were invited to enroll in the honors program who were by no stretch of the imagination of honors calibre.

6. Origin

   Many principals recounted the history of declining enrollment and an effort to "do something to save the school." One principal said the result was that the cart was placed before the horse in the sense that a program grew, unplanned, like Topsy.

7. Some principals mentioned the need for a special kind of teacher for an honors program, prepared to use different methods and face different challenges.

8. Other concerns

   * Students may be harmed by striving too hard to make good marks.

   * Students at Mac High have not performed as well on Departmental Examinations as those in some other schools.

   * There is some concern that there is a possibility of proliferation of honors programs in various high schools.

   * Some principals see the IB program as a gimmick, with ninety six hundred dollars being spent merely for snob value.

   * There hasn't been a distinction made between Archbishop MacDonald as an academic high school and as an honors high school.

   * An honors program is like tunnel vision - focussing on a select group.

3.3.6 Staff Members, Junior High Schools

There were 28 junior high schools in the system which were contacted. The principal, assistant principals, counsellor (if any), and teachers of Grade IX English, Social Studies, Mathematics, and Science were invited to complete Part 2 of the questionnaire. As shown in Appendix 6, more than 80% of the junior high school staff members asked to complete the questionnaire did so. They agreed (74 to 60) that only students who learn quickly and easily should take an honors program. They disagreed (94 to 44) with the statement that there is a great deal of pressure on matriculation students not to get good marks (see item 2). They strongly agreed that small schools were more likely to be friendly, as did other stakeholder groups, and that the system ought to continue to offer an honors program at Archbishop MacDonald High School. They disagreed (98 to 30) that a strong emphasis on academic achievement may not be good for students socially, emotionally, and spiritually. They emphatically disagreed (114 to 9) with the statement that the honors program in Archbishop MacDonald should be closed down. All groups disagreed with this statement. The danger of parents and students thinking they are "spe-

cial" if the students were in an honors program produced a very evenly divided opinion. They thought an honors program would be a better preparation for university. For further detail and comparison with opinions of others, see appendices 6 and 7.

3.4 SCORES ON ATTITUDE MEASURES

3.4.1 School Subjects Attitude Scales

Table 3.1, below, shows the results of the analysis of the responses to the School Subjects Attitude Scales.

TABLE 3.1

Means and Standard Deviations by Sex and School Type
School Subjects Attitude Scales

School Group	N	Evaluative Mean	Evaluative S.D.	Usefulness Mean	Usefulness S.D.	Difficulty Mean	Difficulty S.D.
Archbishop MacD. Males	38	29.8	6.7	35.3	4.4	20.0	4.8
Archbishop MacD. Females	46	31.9	5.7	35.9	3.5	20.6	4.6
Other H.S.'s Males	59	30.8	5.3	35.7	4.0	25.7	4.2
Other H.S.'s Females	74	31.9	6.2	35.8	4.4	24.8	4.8

Observations: None of the differences are statistically significant ($p = .05$) between corresponding pairs for the Evaluative or the Usefulness scales. For the Difficulty scale, all differences between corresponding groups are significant.

The score corresponding to a "neutral" feeling for each scale is 24. Means higher than this indicate generally positive attitudes. For the Evaluative and Usefulness scales all groups have attitudes that are, on the average, quite positive. With respect to the Difficulty scale, the Archbishop MacDonald students generally view school as difficult, while students in other schools tend to express neutral attitudes.

Students chose the Archbishop MacDonald Honors Program because they wanted a challenge. Evidently they got what they wanted: they found it difficult. They liked it, however, and thought it to be useful, as did other honors students who elected to attend neighborhood schools.

3.4.2 Attitudes Toward the World of Work

This instrument produces 15 scores, described in the test manual (Maguire, et al, 1983, p. 4 - 5) as follows:

1. Preparation by School: Students scoring high on this scale perceive their preparation for entrance into the world of work as being adequate. School Preparation is seen as appropriately job related.

2. Interest and Variability in Jobs: Students scoring high seek jobs that are interesting, challenging and varied.

3. Diligence: Students scoring high have attitudes favorable to hard work, regardless of supervision.

4. Laziness: Students who have high scores on this scale indicate attitudes of getting as much as possible for as little effort as possible.

5. Job Security: This scale describes students who value job security, often over other characteristics of jobs.

6. Positive Employer Characteristics: Students scoring high on this scale view employers as honest, fair and generally upstanding humans.

7. Independence: Students scoring high on this scale rate the preservation of their own independence above that of other job characteristics.

8. Money: Students scoring high on this scale view salary as being one of the most important determinants of a good job.

9. Ambition: Students scoring high on this scale view striving for success as more important than other considerations like friends.

10. Locus of Control: Students scoring high on this scale view getting and holding a job as being largely a matter outside of their control--luck, knowing the right person, etc.

11. Confidence in Succeeding: High scorers on this scale are confident of their ability of getting a job and being successful.

12. Negative Employer Characteristics: Students scoring high on this scale see employers as greedy and unfair--mostly concerned with looking out for their own interests.

13. Social Relations: Students scoring high on this scale see social relations as being the important determiners of job satisfaction. They prefer working with people and being a part of a team.

14. Attitudes Towards Unemployment: Students scoring high on this scale view unemployment as undesirable, even shameful.

15. General Attitudes Towards Earning a Living: Students scor-

ing high on this scale have a positive attitude toward earning a living, typified by a statement "I am looking forward to earning my own way."

Table 3.2, shows the results of the analysis of the responses.

TABLE 3.2

Means and Standard Deviations of Scores on the Attitude Toward the World of Work

	Archbishop MacDonald				Other High Schools			
	Males N = 39		Females N = 40		Males N = 57		Females N = 74	
Subscale	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Preparation	17.8	2.6	18.4	2.5	18.7	2.6	18.6	2.5
Interest	20.2	2.0	20.9	1.5	20.0	2.0	20.2	1.8
Diligence	21.3	2.7	21.8	2.0	20.5	2.0	21.4	1.9
Laziness	11.0	3.1	9.9	3.2	10.3	2.8	9.5	2.5
Job Security	18.4	2.4	17.8	2.2	18.2	2.2	17.9	2.3
Pos. Em. Ch.	18.0	2.2	17.5	2.3	17.6	1.9	17.6	2.4
Independence	19.1	2.3	18.3	2.3	17.9	2.3	17.9	2.4
Money	16.1	3.0	14.9	2.7	16.3	2.8	15.2	2.8
Ambition	16.0	1.7	15.6	2.7	16.4	2.2	15.4	2.5
Locus of Con.	13.8	3.4	13.8	2.9	12.9	3.3	13.1	2.8
Confidence	16.2	3.0	16.8	2.1	16.9	2.6	17.0	2.7
Neg. Em. Ch.	15.0	2.5	13.7	2.4	14.5	2.7	14.5	2.5
Social Rel.	19.5	2.2	19.8	2.4	18.8	2.6	20.1	2.1
Unemployment	15.4	2.8	13.6	2.9	15.2	3.1	14.4	2.8
General	17.9	2.0	18.5	2.4	17.5	2.1	17.8	2.1

Observations: Differences between means of corresponding groups are not statistically significant, with one exception, Independence, for the males. This difference is also probably a result of chance, in view of the fact that 30 pairs, in all, may be compared.

Compared to Grade X students in general, the students being studied were generally not different. Percentile ranks were usually in the range from 35 to 70, but there were a few exceptions. These were for the scales labelled Money (percentile ranks clustering about 15, indicating that money was NOT a determinant of a good job), Confidence (Percentile Ranks around 10, indicating a low confidence in ability to get a job), and unemployment (percentile ranks clustering about 20, indicating a view that unemployment is not particularly undesirable).

CHAPTER 4

INTENTS, ISSUES, PROBLEMS, CONCERNS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Authorities in the field of evaluation generally concede that the views of various stakeholder groups on the above matters are an essential component of evaluation. Both Stake (1967) and Guba (1975) emphasize their importance. Some detail is provided in Appendix 2. What do affected persons want? What are their expectations? What, if any, are the foundations of their wants and expectations? On what matters do different persons or groups differ? What difficulties do they perceive? What are their concerns? Such questions are included in intents, issues, problems, and concerns.

Different people react differently to identical circumstances. What is to one person an intent may be a problem or a concern to another. For this reason, we have not tried to sort out or label the matters dealt with in the next sections, but include them under the totality of intents, issues, problems, concerns.

4.2 PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS

4.2.1 Nature of the High School

Perhaps the most fundamental of the intents, issues, problems or concerns was the nature of the high school. For years, the comprehensive high school has been the ideal. It is described as follows by Holton (1982):

> The course offerings of secondary schools has expanded to include subject matter providing for a full range of "needs of adolescents," including typing and office practice, wood and metal working, agriculture, home economics, driver education, a wide range of social studies, a variety of introductory content in the sciences, mathematics through calculus, modern and classical languages and a variety of opportunities in career exploration.

The comprehensive high school as thus described is very familiar to Albertans. It has been the model, but there are doubts, as Ebel (1969) enunciated:

> The comprehensive high school, providing diverse programs to meet the diverse needs of all of its students, is commonly regarded as the ideal in American secondary education.... Despite conscientious efforts to achieve this ideal, however, many secondary schools are dissatisfied with their programs for the gifted, the disadvantaged, those not planning to attend college, and indeed those planning to attend college. Experimental programs, involving more or less radical innovations, appear frequently.

The same kinds of doubts were expressed in a position paper which was prepared by the Archbishop MacDonald Honors Program Advisory Committee. An unpublished paper dated January, 1983, under the title "Draft #8 PROJECT ACT" has this to say on the same topic:

> During the first three quarters of the twentieth century the concept of the large comprehensive high school serving all students has become a cardinal principle of education. However, beginning in the 50's rumbles of dissatisfaction about high school education were voiced and many radical reforms were tried which ultimately bounced off the formidable high school wall into oblivion. Nevertheless, continuing attempts to change the high school and the rise of private schools and programs are manifestations of a continuing unease about the high school. Perhaps the time is appropriate to plan within the Edmonton Catholic School District an alternative high school that is neither comprehensive nor large.

Parents of students attending the honors program at Archbishop MacDonald High School, and the students in the program, voice the same thought when they call for an academic high school. The other high school principals were not opposed to an honors program.

The fundamental intent, issue, problem or concern is whether the the comprehensive high school is the ideal, to the exclusion of specialized high schools.

The debate on this matter is current in the United States, as evidenced by articles by Doyle (1984), and Clark (1985).

4.2.2 Benefit

Another fundamental intent, issue, problem or concern is who benefits from special provisions for the academically capable students: the individual or society? While the obvious answer to the question is "both," the crux of the matter is which is the chief beneficiary. The importance of this is that if society is the chief beneficiary, the defence of resource allocation for provisions for the academically capable rests on a formidably sound base. "We are preparing the leaders of society tomorrow: scientists, medical people, educators...." If, however, the individual is seen as the chief beneficiary, the defence for resource allocation becomes shaky. The answer to this difficult question is equally difficult: "Why should money be poured into special provisions for the academically capable, who are clearly also capable of looking after themselves?"

It was surprising to note all of the members of the school board saw society as the chief beneficiary. The questionnaire item (Part II, #5, Appendix 6) on this matter shows that the other stakeholder groups held mixed opinions. While there was, in general, a majority opinion (of those who expressed an opinion) in

favor of society being the chief beneficiary, the proportion of neutral and "Don't Know" responses, was high. Parents of students attending the honors program were the strongest supporters of the view that society benefits most. Students in other high schools showed a mild tendency to disagree.

4.3 OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

4.3.1 The concept of an Honors Program

In the wider world, much of the debate about democracy, or capitalism, or free enterprise, or the like is plagued by different "pictures in the mind" of the discussants. This phenomenon also occurs in education, with such terms as "intelligent," or "gifted," or "creative." Various stakeholder groups exhibited the same phonomena of different "pictures in the mind" regarding the honors program in Archbishop MacDonald High School.

What is required as a first step in clarifying discussion about an honors program is a clear and agreed upon "picture in the mind." This can be started by a description, by a definition in words, and by an operational definition. The description we propose is in section 3.2, and the operational definition is dealt with to some extent in section 4.3.3, entitled Selection. An attempt at a definition in words follows.

> A high school honors program challenges students who can learn quickly and easily. It provides an academic atmosphere where excellence in academic achievement is approved. It covers the regular high school matriculation program thoroughly, and in less time than that required for other students. The time saved is used to develop certain aspects of the curriculum in greater depth, and to deal with ancillary aspects. The teaching procedures involve a high proportion devoted to those designed to challenge the minds and hearts of the students. School based evaluation of student progress takes into account the extra high-level learning which has occurred.

4.3.2 Honors Programs in Each High School

In the preceding section a philosophical foundation that the comprehensive high school is the ideal was enunciated. If it is intended to provide for a full range of needs of the adolescent, as Holton noted, then why not have each comprehensive high school provide an honors program if that is what is needed? Then there would be specialized programs in each high school for the academically capable. Some of the high schools were,in 1984-85, providing a partial honors program. There was some sentiment in favor of extending such provisions.

Some administrative considerations about this proposal will be considered briefly.

* Numbers: In January, 1984, there were approximately 2000 Grade IX students in the system. Nobody knows what proportion are academically capable because it depends upon the operational definition employed. Suppose the percentage of academically capable was, by definition, set as high as fifteen. This translates to about 300 students. If these were spread evenly over the eight high schools, there would be about 37 in each. It follows that there would be about one class of potential honors students in each.

* Staff: In the above scenario, a specialist in (for example) biology would have one honors class as well as a number of other classes. Whether the "blood, sweat, and tears" involved in teaching an honors class (see section 2.1.6 on the interviews with teachers at Archbishop MacDonald High School) would be acceptable is an open question. There would be a lot of extra work for one class.

There are many other administrative considerations, but all of them may be much less important than the academic atmosphere. No doubt some of the academically capable can withstand peer pressure, but some cannot, according to the interviews with parents and students. School atmosphere is elusive, and extremely difficult to influence. Unless the academic atmosphere congenial to high academic achievement were present, the proposal to have an honors program in each high school would not be a success for some of the students. In the final analysis, the views of students and their parents regarding academic atmosphere would be paramount.

4.3.3 Selection

There is no such thing as a perfect selection system. There are always some students who should have been included but who are missed, and some who are included who should not have been. Self-selection is often at work. In 1984, in the Edmonton Catholic school system, approximately 30 percent of those considered eligible to enrol in the honors program at Archbishop MacDonald High School actually did so (94 out of 303).

A selection system must have a target population. For example, the target population deemed capable of honors performance might be the top fifteen percent of the Grade IX students. The present study shows that with free choice, seventy percent would elect to attend their neighborhood high school, chiefly for reasons of proximity, friends, and family tradition, and thirty percent would actually enrol in the honors program at Archbishop MacDonald High School.

Experience with selection indicates that the criteria for choosing the academically capable are: current academic performance, intelligence, teacher ratings, and self nomination. Measures of current academic performance can usually be improved. They should be geared to the prescribed curriculum and should be sys-

tem wide. Teacher ratings can be improved. Even as short a session as one hour helps in this. Self selection possibly taps the elusive personality characteristics related to the will to achieve, self-confidence, resistance to peer pressure, and the like.

4.3.4 Loss of Capable Students

Within the Edmonton Catholic school system the chief concern expressed by principals of the other high schools, and no doubt representing the views of many of their staff, was that they were losing their best students to the honors program at Archbishop MacDonald High School. While there is an element of truth in this statement, experience shows that they were, in total, losing only thirty percent. The concern also expresses a territorial possessiveness ("our best students"), doubtless rooted in the history of prescribed attendance areas. Educators who firmly believe in the comprehensive high school as an ideal see specialized high schools as a threat. The system already has two such: one for French language and culture, and another for vocational education. A third would continue the erosion of the comprehensive idea.

Students attending the honors program at Archbishop MacDonald High School and their parents see the matter quite differently. The students want and need the academic challenge in a congenial academic atmosphere.

CHAPTER 5

JUDGMENTS

5.1 WHO DECIDES?

Many stakeholder groups had an interest in the honors program at Archbishop MacDonald High School. The system as a whole represented by the school board had the broadest interest, followed by the central office administration. Most directly interested were the students in the honors program and their parents. Much less directly interested were the students (as well as their parents) who had been given a choice, and then elected to attend the neighborhood high school. Very directly interested was the staff at Archbishop MacDonald High School, and perhaps less directly the staffs of other high schools and of the junior high schools. Views were obtained from all of these groups.

Given these stakeholder groups, there is a question of who decides what is to happen. Ultimately, it must be the school board. Raizen (1981, p.6) made this point when he stated:

> There are important limits to the use of evaluation results in the short run. Social problem solving is and ought to be a political process; the forces and events impinging on decisions about programs are often more powerful than empirically derived evidence. The environment in which decisions are made seldom permits swift and unilateral action; new information may actually slow down the process, since it may make decisions more complicated. For these reasons, while evaluators and sponsors should do their best to disseminate evaluation findings, they cannot ensure utilization.

What this evaluation seeks to do is to provide information which will assist decision makers in the difficult process of choosing.

5.2 THE NATURE OF THE HIGH SCHOOL

It is probable that most educators today still accept the comprehensive high school as the ideal way to educate students at the secondary level. The question arises whether, accepting the ideal, there is sufficient flexibility in it to accommodate special system-wide programs, and special system-wide schools. For the Edmonton Catholic school system the answer is already in. A system-wide occupational program is centred at one school, and another school which draws students system-wide uses French as the language of instruction. Arbishop MacDonald High School is akin to the latter. It draws academically capable students system-wide. The question now posed is whether the honors program at Archbishop MacDonald High School should continue. The stakeholder groups answer "Yes."

Perhaps the most directly affected stakeholders are the students

enrolled in the honors program. In order to obtain an unequivocal answer to the question posed, it was made the subject of two items on Part 2 of the questionnaire (shown in Appendix 6). Item 4 stated that, "The Edmonton Catholic School System ought to continue to offer a full honors program at Archbishop MacDonald High School" and item 8 stated, "The honors program in Archbishop MacDonald High School should be closed down."

A summary of the results is given below. See Appendix 6 for more complete data.

Group	Continue Program	Do not drop program
Students enrolled	78 out of 85	80 out of 86
Parents of above	69 out of 70	70 out of 70
Students invited, not enrolled	84 out of 113	95 out of 120
Parents of above	70 out of 95	78 out of 92
Staff, Jr. High Schools	111 out of 146	112 out of 136

Overall, there is strong support for the program from these stakeholder groups, strongest from those in the best position to know about the program. Appendix 6 shows that a significant number of those who felt less informed marked the items "Don't Know". In general, these stakeholders wanted the honors program in Archbishop MacDonald High School to continue.

5.3 AN ACCEPTED CONCEPT OF AN HONORS PROGRAM

One very important stakeholder group, the principals of other high schools, did not have a clear concept of the nature of an honors program, a difficulty shared by members of other groups. There were good reasons: the program was new - only four years old; it was developing or evolving; it was, as a result, changing; some parts or aspects such as teaching methods were difficult to describe; and as yet few attempts had been made to enunciate the concept. For these and other reasons it was misunderstood.

There are compelling reasons for efforts to alleviate this misunderstanding. The honors program should have a meaning which is commonly understood. It is regarded by students and parents as a valuable program which should be continued. It may be offered in part in a number of high schools. Students and parents need to know what it is, and if the term "honors" continues in use, it should mean the same thing from school to school, and for members of the various stakeholder groups.

This evaluation has made a start in attempting to set down goals, objectives and aspects of an honors program, as well as a description and a definition. This process should be continued. The process may be as important, or even more important, than the product. A few random process suggestions follow.

* The high school principals in the system could be challenged

to develop a "white paper" or "position paper" on the concept of an honors program. It could be expected that Archbishop MacDonald would provide leadership. A first draft might well up-date and refine the previously-mentioned document "Project ACT".

* It should be made clear that the term "honors" must be used consistently throughout the system. Since there were, as of 1985, three high schools offering honors programs, there is a strong nucleus for attempts to hammer out necessary core ingredients which must be present for a program to be called honors, and variation which might well be acceptable beyond the core uniformity.

* Assistance in developing an honors program could be encouraged. The staff at Archbishop MacDonald received help from that of Old Scona. Similarly, within the system, other schools could look to the Archbishop MacDonald staff for help. The possibilities are many: exchange of staff (even including administrators) for short periods; help in inservice; exchange of materials; interschool visits; and the like.

* Talks, videotapes, demonstrations and the like could be devised. Based on the experience of this evaluation, student and staff comments would be most explanatory to those who should know what an honors program includes.

* The most important matter is recognition of the need for an accepted concept of an honors program. System administrators and school administrators can then readily devise many ways of satisfying this need.

5.4 HONORS PROGRAMS IN OTHER HIGH SCHOOLS

At the time of the evaluation (the 1984-85 school year) two other high schools were offering partial honors programs. The question now posed is whether other high schools in the system should offer partial honors programs. This question was not addressed directly in this evaluation but much evidence which applied to the decision was uncovered from the students invited to attend Archbishop MacDonald High School who did not do so, and from their parents.

Many students and parents were very happy with the neighborhood high school. In addition, distance and friends were strong reasons for choosing the neighborhood high school. For details see Appendix 6, particularly the figures for Part 1, Item 1, "Many of my friends are going to this school" and Item 9, "The school is nearby or easy to reach by bus." For example, 114 out of 138 students marked item 1 as of considerable, great, or very great importance in choosing which school to attend and 108 out of 137 marked item 9 in a similar way.

A major result of these and other factors is shown in Table 3.1. Of 303 students invited in the spring of 1984 to enroll in the honors program at Archbishop MacDonald High School, 94 or 31% did so, and 209 or 69% attended other high schools in the system. During the interviews, when given the list of students who had been invited to enrol in the honors program in Archbishop MacDonald High School who, instead, enrolled in their neighborhood school, principals readily identified "top students." See Table 3.1 for the numbers in the various schools. It can be argued that the system has a responsibility to these students beyond that provided for in the honors program at Archbishop MacDonald. The argument is more compelling because Archbishop MacDonald is certainly not centrally located in the system.

There is considerable evidence that while some students are equally capable, academically, in either the literacy or numeracy domains, others are better in one or the other. This general observation based on the current knowledge applies to the question being addressed.

Returning to the question posed as to whether other high schools in the system should offer partial honors programs, the question can be answered in the affirmative but with certain conditions. These are set forth below.

* The high school wants to offer such a program.

* The school has the resources.

* The term "honors" should not be employed unless it is used in the same sense throughout the system.

* There are honors students in sufficient numbers attending that school to warrant a special class.

* One subject should be offered from the literacy domain (English, social studies, a second language), and one from the numeracy domain (mathematics, biology, chemistry, physics).

* The full honors program be reserved for Archbishop MacDonald High School. In practice, this might mean a maximum of three honors courses at other high schools.

* The school can provide the requisite academic atmosphere.

* The school is willing to work with other high schools offering an honors program in order to ensure a common meaning to the concept.

5.5 SELECTION OF STUDENTS

5.5.1 Effectiveness of Rating Instruments

As was noted in Section 3.2.4, Grade IX students seeking entry

into the honors program at Archbishop MacDonald High school, submitted application forms. These forms contained spring marks in five Grade IX subjects: Language, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science and French. In addition, four questionnaires, or rating scales (see Appendix 1) were completed by three groups. The four questionnaires dealt with Learning Characteristics, Motivational Characteristics, Creativity Characteristics and Leadership Characteristics, and a set was completed by prospective students, their parents and junior high schools. That is, for each student who was invited to enroll in the honors program at Archbishop MacDonald High School and subsequently sought admission, there was a total of twelve questionnaires submitted with the application form. In addition, Grade X grade point averages for midyear were collected at the end of the first semester in early 1985. An obvious question arises as to the effectiveness of the questionnaires. The matter was dealt with by posing seven specific questions related to the reliability and validity of the instruments:

1. How reliable a measure was the average of the achievement scores for Grade IX submitted in April, 1984?

2. How reliable was each instrument for each group?

3. How reliable was the overall total score of the 12 instruments?

4. What evidence was there that the instruments were valid for the purpose of assisting in the selection of students for the honors program at Archbishop MacDonald High School?

5. How do the mean responses for the items in each form compare across the three groups?

6. Which items were the strongest in terms of contribution to the total scores for the students?

7. Which items were the weakest in terms of contritution to the total scores for the students?

Responses to these questions are given below. The figures are based on a twenty percent random sample from the total group of over three hundred applicants.

Alpha coefficients were used to estimate the reliability of the Grade IX scores. The result was as follows:

Alpha for Grade IX scores = .91

Table 5.1 shows the reliability estimates (alpha coefficients) for each questionnaire for each of the three groups.

Table 5.1

Reliability Estimates of Questionnaires by Group
(N = 66)

Group	Learning	Motivational	Creativity	Leadership	Mean
Students	.75	.73	.73	.71	.73
Parents	.80	.81	.78	.68	.76
School	.89	.75	.81	.81	.82

Observations: Since these values reflect internal consistencey, lower values might mean that a broader trait is being considered, or that there is more chance or statistical error involved in the responses.

The reliability coefficients are respectable, in view of the brevity of the questionnaires.

The coefficients for the forms submitted by the junior high schools averaged slightly higher than the coefficients for the other two groups.

Table 5.2

Reliability Estimates for Four Questionnaires Combined, by Group

Group	Reliability
Students	.82
Parents	.80
School	.87

Observations: As would be expected, the reliability coefficient for the forms submitted by the school is higher that the values for the other two groups.

A response to Question 3, regarding reliability of all the instruments combined, was based on an Alpha Coefficient for the averages of the five scores.

The total score for each of the 12 questionnaires was calculated, then a grand total for each student. This was considered important because this was the procedure employed by Archbishop MacDonald High School for placing students in the full honors program the partial honors program or the matriculation program.

The Alpha Coefficient for the total scores was .86.

Observation: This coefficient reflects the degree to which the twelve scores for each student were measuring the same trait.

The reliability is quite respectable.

With respect to question 4, information regarding the validity of the questionnaires is meagre, but not completely absent. The matrix showing correlations between all pairs of scores provides information relevant to a validity study. This is especially true because the midyear score (grade point average) for the students was added to the list of scores to be analysed. While several groups of correlations were relevant from the viewpoint of investigating the validity of the questionnaires, the correlations between Grade X grade point average and other scores were particularly interesting.

Table 5.3

Correlation Matrix for Eighteen Scores

Item	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
2	60																
3	65	46															
4	72	64	78														
5	50	66	60	54													
6	28	08	52	25	14												
7	09	-12	35	08	05	77											
8	13	01	27	08	13	63	60										
9	08	13	29	07	28	50	44	53									
10	-10	-18	17	-01	-08	70	54	53	27								
11	20	10	32	16	10	71	72	56	28	72							
12	19	-03	25	10	02	54	49	73	16	65	65						
13	08	13	23	-02	17	49	38	51	66	44	39	34					
14	57	39	53	57	37	29	18	19	10	08	27	19	12				
15	51	14	50	51	34	30	22	35	26	12	18	24	20	73			
16	44	21	42	50	32	25	17	35	19	13	14	28	08	67	71		
17	45	37	59	50	59	29	20	33	57	00	14	06	46	53	64	62	
18	52	57	57	61	50	30	02	13	08	09	19	12	03	50	41	52	39

Item Code

Items 1 - 5	Grade IX Achievement Scores, Spring, 1984: Language, Social Studies, Mathematics, Science, French.
Items 6 - 9	Scores on Student Questionnaires: Learning, Motivational, Creativity and Leadership Characteristics.
Items 10 - 13	Scores on Parent Questionnaires: The same four scores as for students.
Items 14 - 17	Scores on School Questionnaire: The same four scores as for students and parents.
Item 18	Grade X Grade Point Average, Midterm, 1984-85.

With respect to the correlations appearing in Table 5.3, it seemed reasonable to hypothesize as follows, if the measures were reliable and valid:

1. Correlations within each group would be relatively high.

That is, correlations between pairs for items 1 - 5, 6 - 9, 10 - 13 and 14 - 17 would be high.

2. Grade X achievement scores are, in a sense, a criterion measure for checking the validity of the selection procedures, therefore they would correlate positively with all of the other scores. It is expected that the highest correlations would be with the Grade IX achievement scores.

3. Correlations between measures of the same thing, across groups, would be higher that correlations between different traits. That is correlations between pairs for items 6, 10 and 14, items 7, 11 and 15, items 8, 12 and 16, and items 9, 13 and 17 would be higher than average.

Observations: Hypothesis 1, above is borne out. This is to be expected, because these correlation clusters are reflections of the reliabilities of the overall ratings for the three groups. These reliabilities, reported in Table 1, were reasonably high.

The Grade X achievement scores correlated well with the Grade IX achievement scores, as expected, and also correlated well with the teachers ratings. Correlations with ratings by students were low, the highest being .30 with Learning Characteristics, and for parents the highest was only .19. Some of the correlations (.02 and .03) were virtually zero. This indicated that, for the most part, the ratings by students and parents played only minor roles in assisting the selection procedures.

For items 6, 10 and 14, concerning Learning Characteristics, the correlation between students' and parents' ratings was high (.70) while for parents' and teachers' ratings the value was near zero (.08). For items 7, 11 and 14 the correlation between students' and parents' ratings was again high (.72) while the others were near .2. For items 8, 12 and 16 the correlation for ratings by students and parents was .73, and the others were about .3. For items 9, 13 and 17 all of the ratings were at least moderately high, the lowest being a respectable .46, the highest .66.

The negative (but near zero) correlations between parents' ratings for Learning Characteristics and Grade IX achievement scores were surprising. It was noted that the correlations for teachers in this area clustered around .5.

Table 5.4, below, shows the mean rating by students, parents, and schools for each of the four traits considered relevant, by

Renzulli *et al*, to giftedness. The possible responses for each characteristic were:

1 = Seldom or never
2 = Occasionally
3 = Considerably
4 = Almost always

Learning Characteristics had eight items, Motivation had 9, Creativity had 9, and Leadership had 10.

Table 5.4

Mean Responses to Items by Group and Trait

	Item #	Learning	Motivation	Creativity	Leadership
Students	1	2.8	2.9	3.0	3.3
	2	3.0	2.6	2.9	3.1
	3	3.0	3.1	2.6	3.2
	4	3.2	3.1	2.7	3.3
	5	2.9	3.3	3.2	3.2
	6	2.9	2.7	3.1	3.1
	7	2.9	2.7	2.8	3.0
	8	3.2	3.0	3.0	2.4
	9	---	3.2	2.5	2.8
	10	---	---	---	2.8
Parents	1	2.9	3.1	3.0	3.4
	2	3.2	2.9	2.9	3.4
	3	3.3	3.2	2.8	3.4
	4	3.2	3.0	2.4	3.3
	5	3.0	3.2	3.0	3.4
	6	3.3	2.7	3.0	3.1
	7	2.9	2.9	2.7	3.2
	8	3.1	2.9	3.0	2.5
	9	---	3.3	2.5	2.9
	10	---	---	---	2.7
School	1	3.0	3.2	3.0	3.9
	2	3.0	2.2	2.8	3.3
	3	3.2	3.0	2.6	3.3
	4	3.1	3.2	2.3	3.5
	5	3.0	3.3	2.8	3.4
	6	3.2	2.9	2.9	3.2
	7	3.0	2.6	2.7	3.3
	8	3.0	2.7	2.8	2.2
	9	---	3.0	2.5	2.8
	10	---	---	---	2.6

Observations: The means tended to be higher than .3, representing a rather strong presence of each characteristic. Only 5 means, out of a total of 96, were below 2.5. This supports the assumption underly-

ing the use of the questionnaires (adapted from forms developed by Renzulli, et al) that gifted students display the characteristics listed. However, some of the characteristics do not distinguish the strong prospects for an honors program from the weaker prospects. For example, the candidates for an honors program are generally liked by their peers (Leadership, item 3) but the best liked are probably not stronger candidates for an honors program than those who are less liked.

Two items with means below 2.5 appeared on two sets of ratings. Leadership item 8 (dominates others) were given low means by students and the school. Creativity item 4 (high risk taker) was rated low by parents and the school.

Question 6 was answered by identifying all items where responses correlated .5 or higher with the students' total scores on all 108 items. The figure .5 was chosen because this represented a situation where 25% of the variation was accounted for. Table 5.5, below, shows the results of the process. Items are shown in decending order of the correlation coefficients. The group related to the item, the item number, and a brief description of the subject matter of the item is provided in each case.

Table 5.5

Items Correlating .5 or Higher With Total Scores

Item #	Group	Form	Correl.	Mean	Subject Matter of Item
2	Parent	Learn.	.67	3.2	Storehouse of information
7	Student	Motiv.	.60	2.7	Self assertive; stubborn
3	Student	Creat.	.59	2.6	Holds views tenaciously
3	Student	Learn.	.58	3.0	Quick mastery and recall
2	Student	Learn.	.57	3.0	Storehouse of information
5	School	Leader.	.57	3.4	Expresses well; verbal
7	Student	Learn.	.56	2.9	Reads adult level books
1	School	Creat.	.56	3.0	Curious; asks questions
6	Parent	Motiv.	.54	2.7	Interest in adult problems
4	Parent	Motiv.	.53	3.0	Seeks perfection; critical
7	Parent	Motiv.	.53	2.9	Self assertive; stubborn
1	School	Learn.	.53	3.0	Large vocabulary; fluent
1	School	Motiv.	.53	3.2	Gets absorbed; involved
5	School	Creat.	.53	2.8	Manipulates ideas; fantasy
7	School	Learn.	.52	3.0	Reads adult level books
1	Student	Learn.	.51	2.8	Large vocabulary; fluent
8	Student	Leader	.51	2.4	Directs activity;dominates
5	Parent	Leader	.51	3.4	Expresses well; verbal
1	Student	Creat.	.50	3.0	Curious; asks questions
8	School	Motiv.	.50	2.7	Organizes and structures
2	School	Leader.	.50	3.3	Self confident among peers

Observations: Of the 21 items that correlated highly with total scores, 7 were for Learning Characteristics, 6 for Motivational Characteristics, and 4 each for Creativity Characteristics and Leadership Characteristics.

The items that correlated highest were, for the most part, in the area of academic achievement; that is, they would be found in the questionnaires on Learning Characteristics and Motivational Characteristics. However, several of the items in the other two areas actually reflected academic achievement also. For example, one of the items from the Creativity Characteristics questionnaire that exhibited a high correlation dealt with holding views tenaciously, while two dealt with curiosity and asking questions.

Items that correlated highly with total scores did not necessarilyhave high means. For example, the second and third entries in the table, exhibiting correlations of .60 and .59, had means among the lowest in the table.

Question 7 was attacked in a manner similar to that used for question 6. Items that had low correlations with total scores were selected. A cutoff value for the correlation of .224 was chosen, because correlations below this value represented items that accounted for less that 5% of the variation. Table 6, below, lists the details of the items that had low correlations. The organization of the table is similar to that of Table 5.5, shown on the previous page.

Table 5.6

Items Correlation .224 or Lower with Total Scores

Item #	Group	Form	Correl.	Mean	Subject Matter of Item
9	Parent	Learn.	.22	3.0	Judges right and wrong
9	School	Creat.	.21	2.5	Nonconforming, different
5	Parent	Learn.	.21	3.0	Grasps and uses principles
9	School	Leader.	.19	2.8	Attends H.S. social events
5	School	Motiv.	.19	3.3	Works independently
4	Parent	Creat.	.19	2.4	Risk taker; advendurous
7	Parent	Leader.	.17	3.2	Enjoys company of others
4	School	Creat.	.16	2.3	Risk taker; adventurous
3	Student	Leader	.13	3.2	Well liked by peers
3	Student	Motiv.	.11	3.1	Needs no external motiv.
10	Parent	Leader.	.10	2.7	Excels in athletics
10	School	Leader.	.09	2.6	Excels in athletics
10	Student	Leader.	.08	2.8	Excels in athletics
4	Student	Leader.	.01	3.3	Cooperative and easygoing

Observations: Of the 14 items in the table above, half are from the scales of Leadership Characteristics, 3 are from scales of Creativity Characteristics, and 2 each from scales of Learning Characteristics and Motivational Characteristics.

"Excels in Athletics" had a low correlation for each of the three groups, and in addition, the means were low.

Low correlations were not necessarily associated with low means. For example, "Prefers to Work Independently" had a correlation of .19, but the mean of 3.3 was among the highest in either Table 5.5 or Table 5.6.

5.6 MAIN STRENGTHS AND SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS

5.6.1 Academic Atmosphere

One of the greatest strengths of the honors program at Archbishop MacDonald High School is the academic atmosphere. This is a fusion of a number of components: challenge; high standards, and an excellent preparation for university; a sense of really having learned and mastered difficult material; acceptance, and even approval by peers of high academic achievement. There is no doubt that students enrolled in the honors program identified the academic atmosphere (see Appendix 4). Some of the phrases used were, "challenging...., better standards for learning...., a better education and preparation for university...." A few additional student comments not listed in Appendix 4, taken from the student responses to the questionnaire, follow.

* I felt that the honors program offered at Archbishop MacDonald would give me the best preparation and advantage for university and for my career.

* I enjoy taking the honors program at Archbishop MacDonald not only for the knowledge that will aid me in university, but also in everyday life, and for what I want to learn because I am "just interested."

* Better standards for learning. Different approach to education.

* I enjoy the school's atmosphere. The students are friendly and helpful. The teachers are willing to go out of their way to make the program challenging.

* I find it more challenging and I don't get held back by slower learners. I don't get bored.

* It's hard work but it's really a lot of fun and it's worthwhile.

* Excellent - challenging although it is a lot of work.

* I find this program very interesting and beneficial. This program has helped me choose my career and broaden my views on life.

* There really isn't pressure to get good marks here either. It's up to you.

Not all of such student comments are quoted above. They are too numerous, and become repetitive. And not only students extolled the academic atmosphere; see parents' comments from the questionnaire, as quoted in Appendix 3. As with student comments, many more parent comments could have been included. Staff members during interviews stressed the academic atmosphere, see Section 3.3.4. Here are additional staff views, taken from the interview records.

* Students find a lot of challenge, reward, and content, and good teacher preparation. They are able to express their views, talents, gifts in a common and supportive atmosphere in contrast with having been "put down" by people who don't have their talents.

* It is no snap teaching in an honors program. You have to redirect your teaching style. There is a great degree of respect among students. They respect each other's ability. There is competition, but not destructive competition.

School atmosphere is an elusive concept. An academic atmosphere, as one part or aspect of school atmosphere, is equally elusive. It has been illustrated by statements made by those intimately concerned: students, parents, staff. Whatever it is, Archbishop MacDonald High School has an academic atmosphere which is identified by the participants and highly valued by them.

5.6.2 School Atmosphere

Many staff members at Archbishop MacDonald High School mentioned a sense of unity among themselves because they were all working toward agreed-upon goals. They, students, and parents feel the advantage of smallness, where, as one student put it, "you are known as a person, not just a number." The school tries to treat students reasonably: "respect yourself, respect others, and they will respect you." For its size, the school has an excellent program in sports. The social activities are good. As one student, not attending Archbishop MacDonald put it, "Their dances are great." They have paraliturgies at Thanksgiving and Christmas, and a traditional Christmas dinner which the staff serves and at which students exchange gifts. Many students mentioned the friendly atmosphere.

There is, in addition, a "Wednesday afternoon" program which

stresses community service. The spirit of service to others is encouraged and fostered.

5.6.3 Voluntary Participation

The procedure used in 1984 which eventuated in 93 students enrolling in the honors program in Grade X in the 1984-85 school year were a combination of selection by criteria and self-selection. As is stated in Section 5.4, the system supplied a list of names of Grade IX students which specified ability and achievement levels. The names of the students in each junior high school were provided to the principal, who was invited to suggest additions and deletions. This procedure identified 303 students who were invited to attend. Parents, junior high school staffs, and the students were asked to complete a rating of four characteristics: learning, motivation, creativity, and leadership. The self-selection involved generated student groups which reacted quite differently to the questionnaire items. While some of the difference can no doubt be attributed to attending Archbishop MacDonald High School as contrasted with attending another high school, some is more basic. In general, the self-selection produced a group of students who enrolled at Archbishop MacDonald who were strongly motivated in favor of challenging and difficult work. This is probably the chief characteristic of the honors program students. It is also a great strength of the program at Archbishop MacDonald High School. In fact, it was regarded by the evaluators as a prime element of an honors program (see section 3.2.2).

5.6.4 Partial Honors Program

A major strength of the special program at Archbishop MacDonald High School is the partial honors program. A student who finds the honors program too much work, or who is unable to cope with the honors program in one or more subjects, or who falls behind because of illness, or who loses interest, can revert to the partial honors program easily and with no "loss of face." The partial honors program constitutes an effective safety valve.

5.6.5 Staffing

Staffing is both a great strength and a weakness. Several members of the existing staff developed the honors program and feel it is their own. The sense of unity and cohesion has already been mentioned. The appreciation that students and parents have expressed about dedicated, caring, readily accessible staff members has already been noted. In the end, it is the teacher on the firing line who makes the most difference in a program.

One of the points made by existing staff is that teaching in the honors program requires a different mix of procedures than does teaching in other programs. Students learn from each other. This has to be arranged. Challenge means high-level thinking. Old hands in the honors program describe the painful learning

experience they undertook. The selection or acquisition of teachers willing to undergo this re-learning, and the help in the form of inservice education, are problems which the evaluators believe need addressing, as is another most difficult matter, namely, numbers of staff.

5.6.6 Neighborhood Students

Section 5.5.3 explained how characteristics of students in the honors program constituted a major strength of the program. However, there are students who live close by. Sometimes their older brothers or sisters or both attended "Mac High." Should such students be excluded if they are not of matriculation calibre, or if they fail to meet the average of 70 currently required upon leaving Grade IX? A strict adherence to the selection guidelines would result in a "Yes" answer. There is no doubt but that students such as those described present a problem, and constitute a weakness in the honors program proposal.

5.6.7 Selection of Students

The matter of selection of students crops up in many places. Imperfections in selection procedures decrease the effectiveness of the honors program. A careful reading of some of the student comments (from the questionnaire) classified as critical can lead to the interpretation that some, at least, of the critical students were misfits in the program. This is, of course to be expected, however, it is appropriate to seek to improve the procedures so that the number of misfits will be reduced.

A study of the selection procedures produced these observations:

* Having twelve ratings (four characteristics by three raters) is not necessary, since the honors program is limited to the academically able who wish to be challenged.

* Ratings by school are more reliable than ratings by the students and ratings by the parents, although all of the reliability coefficients were respectable.

* Ratings by students, and particularly by parents, contributed only minimally to the selection process. While the ratings were reliable, they were not high in validity in the sense of correlating with achievement scores. Some of the ratings by parents correlated near zero or negatively with achievement.

* The grouping of the items in the questionnaires (Learning Characteristics, Motivational Characteristics, etc.) did not seem to be justified. Some of the items in each group seemed to belong in other groups (eg. "Excels in athletics" in the Leadership group, "Judges right from wrong" in the Learning Characteristics group, and "Expresses well, verbal" in the Leadership group.

CHAPTER 6

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 FINDINGS

1. The program offered at Archbishop MacDonald High School was perceived to be different by the members of its staff, by the students and by the parents, and to a lesser degree, by staff members in other high schools.

2. The special program at Archbishop MacDonald High School was being delivered largely as planned.

3. The honors program at Archbishop MacDonald High School was being developed as more experience accumulated.

4. The honors program at Archbishop MacDonald High School was serving an identifiable group of students who were happy with the program.

5. Students invited to enroll in the honors program at Archbishop MacDonald High School but did not do so were happy with their progress in their neighborhood schools.

6. Selection procedures were generally successful but tended to be somewhat cumbersome and inefficient.

7. There was considerable misunderstanding and mistrust of the Archbishop MacDonald High School honors program existing in the other high schools.

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The honors program offered at Archbishop MacDonald High School should be continued.

2. Selection procedures should be studied further with a view to making them simpler and more valid.

3. High schools other than Archbishop MacDonald, should be permitted to offer some honors courses if they so desire. This should be done so as to take into account the interests and abilities of the school staffs, and should be organized so that each school has at least one honors course with a strong verbal component (eg. language, literature, social studies, French) and one with a strong quantitative or scientific component (eg. mathematics, chemistry, physics).

4. The term "honors course" should have a common meaning for students and parents in the system. This requires some system uniformity but not necessarily identity.

5. There should be cooperation among the high schools with respect to honors courses. All the high schools should be given the opportunity of giving input to the honors courses, wherever they may be taught. There might be systematic exchange of teachers between Archbishop MacDonald High School and other high schools to assist in establishing honors courses in these schools. This would also facilitate input by all teachers interested in honors courses.

6. Junior high school principals should be given more information with respect to the honors program at Archbishop MacDonald High School with a view to helping them select the students best suited to the program.

7. Designated members of the central office staff should be more directly involved in the development of the honors courses and of the selection procedures in order to protect the interests of students and parents in the system.

8. Archbishop MacDonald High School should continue to offer matriculation-level courses in addition to the honors courses. Without this provision, the availability of a partial honors program for some students would be jeopardized.

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APPENDIX I

APPENDIX 1

MEASUREMENT INSTRUMENTS

Copies of the following measurement instruments connected with this study are included in the pages that follow.

1. Application Form and Rating Questionnaire
2. Parents' Opinions.
3. Students' Opinions.
4. Junior High School Staff Opinions.

ARCHBISHOP MACDONALD HIGH SCHOOL

STUDENT APPLICATION FORM - Honors Program

Part I - For Completion by the STUDENT. Date: _____

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____ TELEPHONE: _____

BIRTHDATE: _____ AGE: _____

NAME OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL: _____

GRADE 9 PROGRAM: MOST RECENT MARK

LANGUAGE	_____
MATHEMATICS	_____
SOCIAL STUDIES	_____
SCIENCE	_____
FRENCH	_____

What subjects in your Grade 9 program interest you most?

_____

_____

Please indicate in a paragraph your reasons for seeking admission to the Honors Program. (Include what you expect from the program.):

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

I have read through all the materials, filled out the BEHAVIORAL RATING QUESTIONNAIRE, and I submit this application form for your consideration.

SIGNATURE OF STUDENT: _____

PART II - For Completion by the PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN.

I have filled out the BEHAVIORAL RATING QUESTIONNAIRE and have read this application prepared by my son/daughter, and it has been made with my full knowledge and approval.

SIGNATURE OF PARENT and/or GUARDIAN: _____

DATE: _____

PARENT COMMENTS (IF ANY): _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

PART III - For Completion by the School (Principal, Counsellor, and Staff)

Principal's, Counsellor's, and/or teacher's recommendations and comments on the students ability and achievement are given great importance in making our selection. Please give a brief and frank assessment of the applicant.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL: _____

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ARCHBISHOP MACDONALD HIGH SCHOOL

PLEASE CHECK ONE:

STUDENT RATING ☐

PARENT RATING ☐

SCHOOL RATING ☐

BEHAVIORAL CHARACTERISTICS RATING QUESTIONNAIRE - HONORS PROGRAM

Adapted from: Joseph S. Renzulli/Linda H. Smith/
Alan J. White/Carolyn M. Callahan/Robert K. Hartman

Name of Student:_____ Date:_____

School:_____ Grade:_____ Age:_____

Directions:

These scales are designed to obtain estimates of a student's characteristics in the areas of learning, motivation, creativity, and leadership. It should be pointed out that a considerable amount of individual differences can exist and therefore, the profiles are likely to vary a great deal. Each item in the scales should be considered separately and should reflect the degree to which you have observed the presence or absence of each characteristic. Please read the statements carefully and check the blank according to the appropriate scale heading:

RATING SCALE:

1. If you have seldom or never observed this characteristic.
2. If you have observed this characteristic occasionally.
3. If you have observed this characteristic to a considerable degree.
4. If you have observed this characteristic almost all of the time.

Part I: Learning Characteristics

	1 Seldom or never	2 Occasionally	3 Considerably	4 Almost always
1. Has unusually advanced vocabulary for age or grade level; uses terms in a meaningful way; has verbal behavior characterized by "richness" of expression, elaboration, and fluency.	___	___	___	___
2. Possesses a large storehouse of information about a variety of topics beyond the usual interests of youngsters his age.	___	___	___	___
3. Has quick mastery and recall of factual information.	___	___	___	___
4. Has rapid insight into cause-effect relationships; tries to discover the how and why of things; asks many provocative questions (as distinct from informational or factual questions); wants to know what makes things (or people) "tick."	___	___	___	___
5. Has a ready grasp of underlying principles and can quickly make valid generalizations about events, people, or things; looks for similarities and differences in events, people, and things.	___	___	___	___
6. Is a keen and alert observer; usually "sees more" or "gets more" out of a story, film, etc. than others.	___	___	___	___
7. Reads a great deal on his own; usually prefers adult level books; does not avoid difficult material; may show a preference for biography, autobiography, encyclopedias, and atlases.	___	___	___	___
8. Tries to understand complicated material by separating it into its respective parts; reasons things out for himself; sees logical and common sense answers.	___	___	___	___

Part II: Motivational Characteristics

	1 Seldom or never	2 Occasionally	3 Considerably	4 Almost always
1. Becomes absorbed and truly involved in certain topics or problems; is persistent in seeking task completion. (It is sometimes difficult to get him to move on to another topic.)	___	___	___	___
2. Is easily bored with routine tasks.	___	___	___	___
3. Needs little external motivation to follow through in work that initially excites him.	___	___	___	___
4. Strives toward perfection; is self critical; is not easily satisfied with his own speed or products.	___	___	___	___
5. Prefers to work independently; requires little direction from teachers.	___	___	___	___
6. Is interested in many "adult" problems such as religion, politics, sex, race - more than usual for age level.	___	___	___	___
7. Often is self assertive (sometimes even aggressive), stubborn in his beliefs.	___	___	___	___
8. Likes to organize and bring structure to things, people, and situations.	___	___	___	___
9. Is quite concerned with right and wrong, good and bad; often evaluates and passes judgment on events, people, and things.	___	___	___	___

Part III: Creativity Characteristics

	1 Seldom or never	2 Occasionally	3 Considerably	4 Almost always
1. Displays a great deal of curiosity about many things; is constantly asking questions about anything and everything.	___	___	___	___
2. Generates a large number of ideas or solutions to problems and questions; often offers unusual ("way out"), unique, clever responses.	___	___	___	___
3. Is uninhibited in expressions of opinion; is sometimes radical and spirited in disagreement; is tenacious.	___	___	___	___
4. Is a high risk taker; is adventurous and speculative.	___	___	___	___
5. Displays a good deal of intellectual playfulness; fantasizes; imagines ("I wonder what would happen if ..."); manipulates ideas (i.e., changes, elaborates upon them); is often concerned with adapting, improving and modifying institutions, objects, and systems.	___	___	___	___
6. Displays a keep sense of humor and sees humor in situations that may not appear to be humorous to others.	___	___	___	___
7. Is unusually aware of his impulses and more open to the irrational in himself (freer expression of feminine interest for boys, greater than usual amount of independence for girls); shows emotional sensitivity.	___	___	___	___
8. Is sensitive to beauty; attends to aesthetic characteristics of things.	___	___	___	___
9. Nonconforming; accepts disorder; is not interested in details; is individualistic; does not fear being different.				
10. Criticizes constructively; is willing to accept authoritiarian pronouncements without critical examination.	___	___	___	___

Part IV: Leadership Characteristics

	1 Seldom or never	2 Occasionally	3 Considerably	4 Almost always
1. Carries responsibility well; can be counted on to do what he has promised and usually does it well.	___	___	___	___
2. Is self confident with children his own age as well as adults; seems comfortable when asked to show his work to the class.	___	___	___	___
3. Seems to be well liked by his classmates.	___	___	___	___
4. Is cooperative with teacher and classmates; tends to avoid bickering and is generally easy to get along with.	___	___	___	___
5. Can express himself well; has good verbal facility and is usually well understood.	___	___	___	___
6. Adapts readily to new situations; is flexible in thought and action and does not seem disturbed when the normal routine is changed.	___	___	___	___
7. Seems to enjoy being around other people; is sociable and prefers not to be alone.	___	___	___	___
8. Tends to dominate others when they are around; generally directs the activity in which he is involved.	___	___	___	___
9. Participates in most social activities connected with the school; can be counted on to be there if anyone is.	___	___	___	___
10. Excels in athletic activities; is well coordinated and enjoys all sorts of athletic games.	___	___	___	___

PARENTS' OPINIONS - PART I

High school in which your son or daughter is taking Grade Ten ---- _____

Rate the importance of each of the following reasons in deciding that your son or daughter would take Grade X in the above-named school this year. Circle the number that corresponds to your opinion. Use the following code for your responses.

1 = of no importance at all; 2 = of a little importance;
3 = of considerable importance; 4 = of great importance;
5 = of very great importance (a deciding factor).

REASONS FOR CHOOSING THE ABOVE-NAMED SCHOOL

1.	Many of the friends of my son/daughter were going to this school.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	An older brother or sister went to this school.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	The school offered a program that my son/daughter would find challenging.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	The school has a good reputation for scholarship.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I thought high marks would be approved by students at this school.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	The junior high school my son or daughter attended recommended this school.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	This school would provide a good preparation for my son/daughter to go to university.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	This school has an atmosphere where everyone wants to learn, rather than being forced.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	This school is nearby or easy to reach by bus.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	This school has athletics, clubs and other extra curricular activities that my son/daughter likes.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	The influence of other students at this school would be good for my son/daughter.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	I didn't consider my son/daughter an honors calibre student.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	The social development of my son/daughter would be better at this school.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	This is a friendly school.	1	2	3	4	5

(Add other reasons that you consider important.)

_____

_____

(OVER)

PARENTS' OPINIONS: PART II

Give your views regarding the honors program at Archbishop Macdonald H.S. by marking the extent of your agreement with each of the statements below. Circle the number that corresponds to your opinion, using the following code.

1 = Strongly Disagree (SD), 2 = Disagree (D),
3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree (N), 4 = Agree (A),
5 = Strongly Agree (SA), 6 = Don't Know (DK).

	SD	D	N	A	SA	DK
1. Only those students who learn quickly and easily should take an honors program.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. In a school with few students who are going to university, and many who are not, there is a lot of pressure on the matriculation students NOT to get good marks.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. A small school is more likely to be friendly.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. The Edmonton Catholic School System ought to continue to offer a full honors program at Archbishop Macdonald High School.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. While both society and the student benefit from provisions such as the honors program at Archbishop Macdonald school, society benefits most.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. A strong emphasis on academic achievement may not be good for students socially, emotionally and spiritually.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Society has invested so much in school provisions for the handicapped that we should now be able to help the brighter students and not try to homogenize them.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. The honors program in Archbishop Macdonald High School should be closed down.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. A danger of an honors program is that the parents and students may think they are "special."	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. An honors program is a better preparation for university than is the regular matriculation (university entrance) program.	1	2	3	4	5	6

(Add other comments on the honors program at Archbishop Macdonald H.S. that you feel are important.)

(GO TO NEXT PAGE)

PARENTS' OPINIONS: PART III

In the following list of statements, mark (X) the ONE that best describes who decided which school your son or daughter would attend for Grade X.

___ My son or daughter was entirely responsible for the decision.

___ The responsibility was about 90% that of my son or daughter, and 10% that of parents and/or the rest of the family.

___ The responsibility was about 75% that of my son or daughter, and 25% that of parents and/or the rest of the family.

___ The responsibility was a 50 - 50 decision between my son or daughter and the parents and/or the rest of the family.

___ The responsibility was about 25% that of my son or daughter, and 75% that of parents and/or the rest of the family.

___ The responsibility was about 10% that of my son or daughter, and 90% that of parents and/or the rest of the family.

___ Parents and/or the family were entirely responsible for the decision.

Please add any comments you would like to make regarding the Grade X program being taken by your son or daughter this year.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

This questionnaire is for the purpose of gathering data for an evaluation of the honors program at Archbishop Macdonald High School. The evaluation was requested by the Edmonton Catholic School system, and is being funded by Alberta Education as part of a larger study of similar programs in Alberta. Your cooperation in completing the questionnaire is appreciated. Putting your name on it is not necessary, but it would help us in keeping track of who has returned their forms. We will telephone all parents whose names are not on the questionnaire to see if it has been returned.

Please return the form in the enclosed, self-addressed envelope to:

Dr. V.R. Nyberg
9015 - 145 St.
Edmonton, Alberta
T5R 0V1

_____
NAME

STUDENTS' OPINIONS - PART I

High school in which you are taking Grade X _____

Rate the importance of each of the following reasons in deciding that you would take Grade X in the above-named school this year. Circle the number that corresponds to your opinion. Use the following code for your responses.

1 = of no importance at all; 2 = of a little importance;
3 = of considerable importance; 4 = of great importance;
5 = of very great importance (a deciding factor).

REASONS FOR CHOOSING THE ABOVE-NAMED SCHOOL

1.	Many of my friends are going to this school.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	An older brother or sister went to this school.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	The school offered a program that I would find challenging.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	The school has a good reputation for scholarship.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I thought high marks would be approved by students at this school.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	The junior high school I attended recommended this school.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	This school would provide a good preparation for me to go to university.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	This school has an atmosphere where everyone wants to learn, rather than being forced.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	This school is nearby or easy to reach by bus.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	This school has athletics, clubs and other extra curricular activities that I like.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	The influence of other students at this school would be good for me.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	I didn't think I was an honors calibre student.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	The social development for me would be better at this school.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	This is a friendly school.	1	2	3	4	5

(Add other reasons that you consider important.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

(OVER)

STUDENTS' OPINIONS: PART II

Give your views regarding the honors program at Archbishop Macdonald H.S. by marking the extent of your agreement with each of the statements below. Circle the number that corresponds to your opinion, using the following code.

1 = Strongly Disagree (SD), 2 = Disagree (D),
3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree (N), 4 = Agree (A),
5 = Strongly Agree (SA), 6 = Don't Know (DK).

	SD	D	N	A	SA	DK
1. Only those students who learn quickly and easily should take an honors program.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. In a school with few students who are going to university, and many who are not, there is a lot of pressure on the matriculation students NOT to get good marks.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. A small school is more likely to be friendly.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. The Edmonton Catholic School System ought to continue to offer a full honors program at Archbishop Macdonald High School.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. While both society and the student benefit from provisions such as the honors program at Archbishop Macdonald school, society benefits most.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. A strong emphasis on academic achievement may not be good for students socially, emotionally and spiritually.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Society has invested so much in school provisions for the handicapped that we should now be able to help the brighter students and not try to homogenize them.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. The honors program in Archbishop Macdonald High School should be closed down.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. A danger of an honors program is that the parents and students may think they are "special."	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. An honors program is a better preparation for university than is the regular matriculation (university entrance) program.	1	2	3	4	5	6

(Add other comments on the honors program at Archbishop Macdonald H.S. that you feel are important.)

(GO TO NEXT PAGE)

STUDENTS' OPINIONS: PART III

In the following list of statements, mark (X) the ONE that best describes who decided which school you would attend for Grade X.

___ I was entirely responsible for the decision.

___ The responsibility was about 90% mine, and 10% that of parents and/or the rest of the family.

___ The responsibility was about 75% mine, and 25% that of parents and/or the rest of the family.

___ The responsibility was a 50 - 50 decision between me and my parents and/or the rest of the family.

___ The responsibility was about 25% mine, and 75% that of my parents and/or the rest of the family.

___ The responsibility was about 10% mine, and 90% that of my parents and/or the rest of the family.

___ My parents and/or the family were entirely responsible for the decision.

Please add any comments you would like to make regarding the Grade X program you are taking this year.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

This questionnaire is for the purpose of gathering data for an evaluation of the honors program at Archbishop Macdonald High School. The evaluation was requested by the Edmonton Catholic School system, and is being funded by Alberta Education as part of a larger study of similar programs in Alberta.

You need not put your name on this form.

Your cooperation in completing the questionnaire is appreciated.

JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STAFF OPINIONS

Give your views regarding the honors program at Archbishop Macdonald H.S. by marking the extent of your agreement with each of the statements below. Circle the number that corresponds to your opinion, using the following code.

1 = Strongly Disagree (SD), 2 = Disagree (D),
3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree (N), 4 = Agree (A),
5 = Strongly Agree (SA), 6 = Don't Know (DK).

	SD	D	N	A	SA	DK
1. Only those students who learn quickly and easily should take an honors program.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. In a school with few students who are going to university, and many who are not, there is a lot of pressure on the matriculation students NOT to get good marks.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. A small school is more likely to be friendly.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. The Edmonton Catholic School System ought to continue to offer a full honors program at Archbishop Macdonald High School.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. While both society and the student benefit from provisions such as the honors program at Archbishop Macdonald school, society benefits most.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. A strong emphasis on academic achievement may not be good for students socially, emotionally and spiritually.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Society has invested so much in school provisions for the handicapped that we should now be able to help the brighter students and not try to homogenize them.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. The honors program in Archbishop Macdonald High School should be closed down.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. A danger of an honors program is that the parents and students may think they are "special."	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. An honors program is a better preparation for university thaN is the regular matriculation (university entrance) program.	1	2	3	4	5	6

(Add other comments on the honors program at Archbishop Macdonald H.S. that you feel are important.)

_____

_____

_____

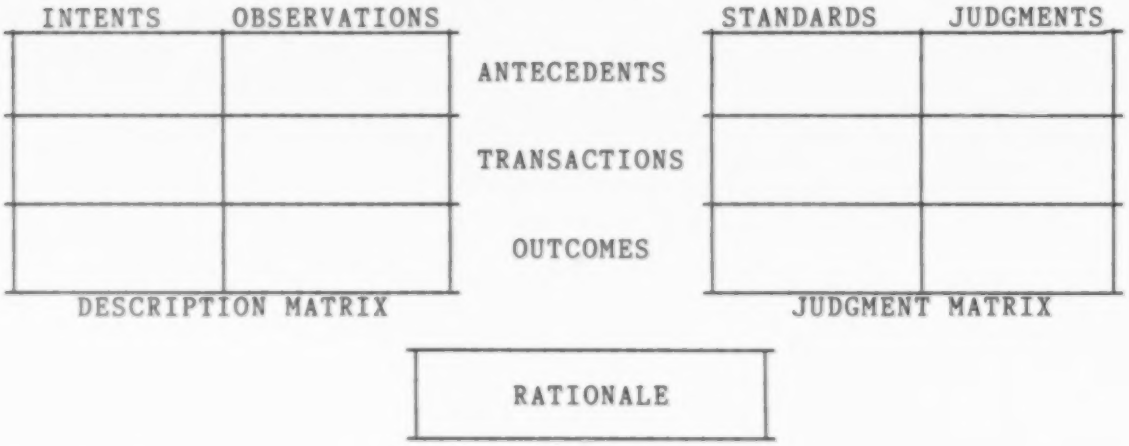
APPENDIX II

APPENDIX 2

MODELS OF EVALUATION

Robert Stake has delineated two models of evaluation (outlined below) called the Countenance Model and the Responsive Model. The first (Stake, 1967) extended the knowledge of the day. The second (AERA Monograph Series #7, 1974; and Stake, 1975) was based on his experience in attempting to evaluate the arts in education, and the Twin-City Institute for Talented Youth.

The Countenance Model

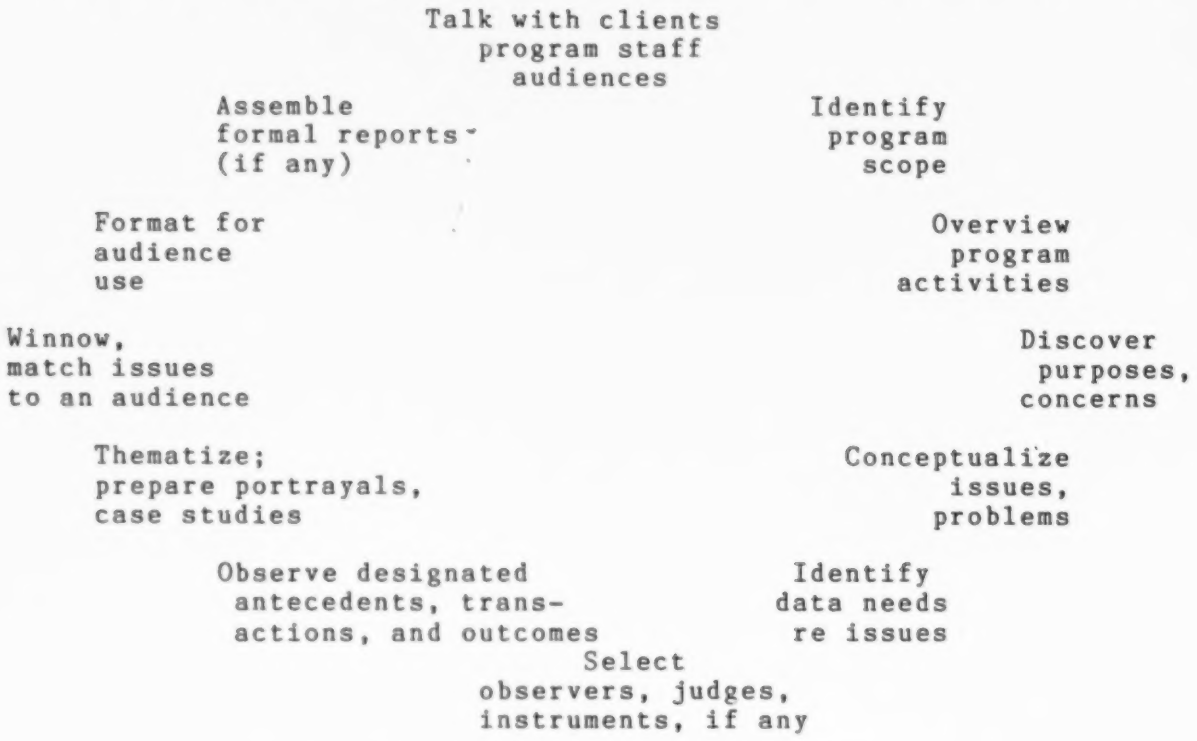


In the Countenance Model of evaluation the first step is to specify the intents (which include goals or objectives) at all three levels (antecedents, transactions and outcomes). The second step is to collect data for the observation column at the same three levels and to check if the intents were actualized. Next the standards are invoked. Standards can be absolute, as for example, specific knowledge or skills; or they may be relative, as for example, the performance of others. The fourth step is to interpret any differences between observed performance and standards. The reader may observe from this summary a heavy focus on what data to collect, examine, analyze and make judgments about.

The Responsive Model focuses more on how to do the evaluation. The clock diagram must not be interpreted to mean that the procedure starts at one point and proceeds from there either clockwise or counterclockwise. But it does not follow the steps usually followed in applying the countenance model: (1) a statement of goals; (2) data collection by objective measures; (3) comparison with standards; (4) evaluation report. A paraphrase of another description (Guba and Lincoln, 1981, p. 25-26) of the Responsive Model may capture the process. This is presented below under the heading "Twelve Steps of the Responsive Model."

The Responsive Model

"Clock" Diagram of Stake's Responsive Model (Stake, 1975, p.20)



Twelve Steps of the Responsive Model

1. The evaluator talks with concerned parties to "gain a sense of their posture" about the purpose of the evaluation.

2. Based on (1) and on documentary sources the evaluator places limits on the scope of the program evaluation.

3. The evaluator makes personal observations about what goes on, and notes differences, if any, between (1) and (2).

4. The evaluator discovers the purposes of the project, and the concerns of the various audiences.

5. The evaluator begins to conceptualize the issues and problems the evaluation should address.

6. The evaluator is now in a position to think about the design of the evaluation -- the data or information needed to deal with the purposes, issues, concerns and problems identified.

7. The evaluator selects instruments to generate the data required (often observers or judges; i.e. human instruments).

8. The evaluator collects the data and processes them.

9. After the data have been collected and processed, the evaluator shifts to information reporting. The best reporting is that which is most natural.

10. It is not desirable for the evaluator to report on every issue or problem, therefore it is necessary to select. Also, not every audience will want or need to know about every issue or concern, so these aspects must be matched to audiences.

11. The format to use in reporting to various audiences must be determined. "Reports may therefore take the form of written statements, discussion sessions, round-table discussions, newspaper articles, films, exhibits, or whatever may be deemed appropriate (Guba and Lincoln, 1981).

12. As a final step, the evaluator prepares a formal report if one is required.

One of the criticisms of the Countenance Model is that it is too complex. The twelve-cell matrix is too much; however it can be simplified, and it is understandable. A criticism of the Responsive Model is that it fails to provide a plan in advance for the evaluation. Stake holds that both can be used in the same evaluation.

There are advantages and disadvantages in each. A clear statement of objectives specifies what the outcomes should be. Given a clear and precise statement, evaluation is quite straightforward. However, frequently there is no written statement. If objectives are inferred from what is being done, then these inferred or implicit objectives should not be used to evaluate outcomes. Usually, written objectives are sufficiently general that all would agree; for example, students will become creative. However, this level of generality, while engendering consensus, is virtually useless for evaluation. Objectives may have been developed to satisfy some higher authority, and in practice have been shelved. Such window dressing objectives may not be the real objectives of the activities which are performed and of the outcomes obtained. In developing or evolving programs it may be psychologicallly unsound to call for a statement of specific objectives too early, in that developing or experimental procedures may be frozen too soon. Another possibility is that the activities designed as part of a developing or evolving program may not prove to be at all appropriate in producing one kind of desired outcome, but may, surprisingly, be very effective in developing a different and also desired outcome. The pros and cons of statements of objectives, general or specific, and how to cope in their absence, are important.

The formative aspects of evaluation may be promoted by inferring objectives from the activities or procedures or outcomes observed. Then the stakeholders can react, "No, that isn't exactly our intention," or, less likely, in wonderment, "So that is what we are trying to do!"

Gaining a sense of the posture of the major stakeholder groups is very important. Almost always, some group feels threatened by the evaluation, or by the thing which is being evaluated. An early realization of the intents, issues, problems, and concerns perceived by various stakeholder groups is most helpful to an evaluation.

The procedure of initially gathering data by interviews has major advantages. A skilful interviewer will secure a valid picture of the interviewee's perceptions. In addition, if there is emotional involvement, this will be detected. The interview, if non directive, helps the interviewee to order thoughts, and relieves pressure. Used in conjunction with the preparation of a questionnaire, it enhances the content validity of the latter. If the interviewee will agree to have his or her name placed on the questionnaire, it permits a comparison between the interview record and the questionnaire result, and provides information on the reliability and validity of the instrument.

The interview gathering can also quite readily be used for information exchange, useful in formative evaluation. For groups of professionals, an analysis or summary of the interviews can quite readily be provided. (In the present evaluation this was done for trustees, staff of Archbishop Macdonald High School, central office administrators, and high school principals.) The procedure was to provide to each trustee the analysis and summary of trustees' views, as expressed in the interviews. A similar procedure was used for the other groups. It is quite likely that individuals in each group passed on these semi-public documents to persons in other groups, therefore dissemination of views occurred. An interesting extension of this procedure would be for the interviewer to request interviewee permission to do this dissemination on a formal basis. This procedure was not used in the current evaluation.

Michael Patton, author of Qualitative Evaluation, at a conference held in Edmonton in early 1985, expressed the view that the procedure of providing feedback information to stakeholder groups would be too much work. This did not prove to be the case.

The limits to be placed on the evaluation cannot readily be specified in advance. Like the ripples from a stone dropped in a pond, there are ever-widening and ever more remote effects. For example, the views of high school principals were obtained in this evaluation, but not the views of all high school teachers. At some point the anticipated incremental information is judged not to warrant the cost involved. The initial budget for the evaluation will have considerable influence on such decisions.

The intents, issues, problems, and concerns should be those of the stakeholder groups. Early delineation of at least the major intents, issues, problems, and concerns will promote the evaluation. The evaluators must have hypotheses about these matters in order to plan data collection, but they must remain hypotheses, and flexible ones at that. Surprises may occur. For example, in this evaluation it was surprising to note the extent to which parents, when interviewed, stated that their children made the decision whether or not to attend the honors program at Archbishop MacDonald High School.

Issues, or matters on which people may choose opposite sides, can be dealt with in an evaluation in a number of ways. They can be clarified; they can be brought into the open; the group, body, organization or agency which is primarily responsible can be identified; arguments for and against can be listed; factors which bear on a decision, and anticipated consequences can be outlined. Evaluators can make recommendations, but in general, decision should be left to the responsible bodies, or if made, should be buttressed by all of the ways of dealing with issues that are listed.

Formative evaluation, which undertakes to improve or better whatever provisions, programs or curricula are in place, is best promoted by involving persons at the grass roots level. This is an essential ingredient of Responsive Evaluation, as described by Stake (1974). Too many splendid evaluation reports have been received only to end up on a shelf. The authors of this report hope that responsive evaluation procedures will affect the processes being evaluated and also the persons who perform the educational tasks. If this is the case, there is some likelihood of lasting change and improvement.

APPENDIX III

APPENDIX 3

ANALYSIS OF WRITTEN COMMENTS MADE BY

PARENTS OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN THE HONORS PROGRAM

A careful sorting of the questionnaires according to the nature of the comments written by parents of students enrolled in the honors program at Archbishop MacDonald High School resulted in the following distribution:

Laudatory or definitely positive comments	13
Mildly laudatory, neutral or mildly critical comments	19
Critical or definitely negative comments	10
No written comments	29
Total	71

Examples of laudatory comments follow:

* It is a small school where students are individuals, are known by their teachers and classmates, not just numbers. Since attending Archbishop MacDonald, our daughter has regained her enthusiasm for school!

* We are very pleased with the calibre of instruction at Archbishop MacDonald; we clearly see our daughter is benefiting greatly from all the school has to offer.

* Our son has found a freedom to go ahead at his own pace and not had to be be held back. The teachers appear to have high standards and have time for the students.

* My son is enjoying Grade X at Archbishop MacDonald - in fact he hasn't been happier at school in years. The atmosphere at the school is terrific and the teachers will go to great lengths to help the student if he has difficulties.

* I feel that the honors program has given my child MANY benefits! I am very much satisfied with the Grade X honors program! It has surpassed all of my expectations for it.

Examples of mildly laudatory, neutral, or mildly critical comments are given below:

* My daughter's teachers, particularly the principal at the junior high school was partly responsible to influence her on taking this decision and I am now appreciative of that advice.

* There are good student-teacher relationships, teachers are always there for the students.

* Basically pleased with the program. Wednesday afternoon activity should be monitored more closely (I understand

staff is reviewing).

* Teachers are well qualified to teach the honors program.

* Students with highly educated parents are at a great advantage; eg. in mathematics, chemistry. They get more help at home.

* Class size should be smaller than average in an honors program, to allow the teacher to deal with the higher level and rate of learning.

* Good academic atmosphere. More homework would be a good thing. Better students have potential that has not been stimulated yet.

* An honors program challenges those with potential, HOWEVER, a school that only offers academics is very unbalanced and very unhealthy. Society does not let you remain "elite." Students must learn to live and work with people of various interests and capabilities if they are to be prepared for the real WORLD.

Examples of critical comments follow:

* Personally, I do not feel that the program lived up to my expectation. It seems to have been an advertising campaign to attract students to the school. My daughter likes the school but I am disappointed with her progress.

* It appears that the honors program has first priority and other regular students feel left out. We believe that there is too much emphasis placed on the honors program and not enough on fine arts, etc.

* There have been student complaints (to us) about the quality of a few teachers in the honors program which are "turning off" student appreciation of certain subject areas. I feel if the emphasis is on quality education, then it should likewise reflect the staff.

* The degree of competitiveness is too great. I would like to see names on the honors board listed in alphabetical order rather than in order of rank.

APPENDIX 4

ANALYSIS OF WRITTEN COMMENTS MADE BY

STUDENTS ENROLLED IN THE HONORS PROGRAM

A careful sorting of the questionnaires according to the written comments produced the following distribution:

Laudatory, or definitely positive comments	26
Mildly laudatory, neutral, or mildly critical comments	13
Critical, or definitely negative comments	17
No written comments	32
Total	88

Examples of laudatory comments follow;

* Nice place. Lots of computers. Great stuff. Good stuff.

* Challenging. Fun. Great so far. Interesting. Beneficial.

* It is a smaller school. There is more teacher/student contact. I believe that I have learned more in this program than in any other open to me. It's terrific!

* Better standards for learning. Different approach to education. It provides a considerably better education academically and socially. I am very satisfied with the program I am taking this year.

* It sets my standards high and makes me work. I like it a lot.

* I feel that Archbishop MacDonald's "honors" program is a great asset to students. It is both challenging and interesting.

* The honors program truly offers students a better education and preparation for university.

* Very interesting, but quite time consuming for myself. I learn much more that I might regularly.

* The school is small and the one to one advantage with teachers is better. Therefore, you learn more and are more comfortable.

* I am very pleased with the honors program and feel that there should be more programs for the academic student.

Examples of mildly laudadory, neutral, or mildly critical comments are given below:

* The program is a challenging one. You learn a considerable

amount more than those in the matriculation program.

* We don't have a lounge or a public student rest area (in some places called "the pit.")

* Another reason for choosing the honors program at Archbishop MacDonald is making friends with people who have similar interests and ambitions, and who are at school because they want to be.

* Teachers have high standards for the work produced but at times certain departments have <u>too</u> high a standard.

* I like the people here. It has a nice friendly environment. It is small so you get to know who everyone is. A student may not be honors calibre but he/she should still be able to try the honors program.

* It could be more <u>interesting</u>. Not really challenging. Some of us don't try as hard as others yet get the same mark. It is a nice place. Very friendly.

* It is very interesting and the school is lots of fun.

* Easily accessible, small, reputable. It is very successful, in my opinion, because it surrounds the students with others of the same calibre.

* The balance of homework is not right. Some subjects demand much, while others almost nothing.

* There should be teachers trained for the honors program if there is to be one.

Examples of critical comments follow:

* Proper teachers are needed for the honors program and the teachers should make sure their students fully understand the concepts.

* There is too much pressure on yourself to do well.

* It's not worth it if you are only average in the honors program. I feel you are not benefited very much.

* I think there is too much emphasis on the "brainier" people. As a partial honors student I think that being in a matric class gives kids something to look up to. It gives them an incentive to learn and be as good as an honors student.

* A better arts program is needed - music, art, drama. These students know how to "add and subtract" but they have no appreciation for the arts. They are losing their creativity

to academics.

* As an entire year it was OK. I will not take it again. If you get lost or behind, you will get bewildered and frustrated quickly.

* Sometimes there is so much homework, so many tests all in so short a time, that often I've lost perspective on everything else. The amount of homework and studying to be done is often so great that there isn't time for anything else.

* I would hope that teachers who find students having difficulty in honors courses should not take an attitude of "if he can't do the work, he shouldn't be here." It should be obvious that students taking full honors are not necessarily all-around prepared for each course. I feel than any teacher for "special" courses should be evaluated on "user friendliness."

* The idea of forcing students into the honors program is plain crap. I don't think one should be pushed and constantly harassed by parents and teachers to be in the program. I am in it for my parents and not myself.

* I feel that two much emphasis is being placed on the honors program. I have enjoyed some of the courses in the program, but others have not helped me at all.

APPENDIX 5

VALIDATION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire was validated by comparing rsults with the interview record. During the interview, parents were asked if they would consent to have their names placed on the questionnaires in order to make comparisons. All but one agreed.

Comparisons were made by studying the interview records and looking for statements which corresponded to questionnaire items. It was found that the questionnaire and interview pairs, insofar as they covered common ground, provided non-contradictory information. This was taken as evidence reflecting on the validity as well as the reliability of the questionnaire.

Several examples of comparisons follow.

Parents of students invited to enrol but who did not

1. The mother explained in the interview that her daughter had decided to enrol in the honors program at Archbishop MacDonald High School, and at the last minute found out there was no school bus that conveyed students there. The girl then decided not to enrol. On Part I of the questionnaire, this parent marked one and only one reason for choosing the neighborhood school. A response of "5" (of very great importance, a deciding factor) was given to the item "This school is nearby or easy to reach by bus."

2. The mother said her son wanted to go to school with his friends, some of whom he had known since Grade I. She said this was the primary reason. On Part I of the questionnaire, this parent responded "5" (of great importance, a deciding factor) to the item which read "Many of the friends of my son/daughter were going to this school."

   The mother stated that she would have been more comfortable if he had enrolled in the honors program at Archbishop MacDonald "but I didn't push him." On Part II she marked SA (strongly agree) for the item "An honors program is better preparation for university than is the regular matriculation (university entrance) program."

3. The mother explained that her daughter had made the decision to attend the neighborhood school. "She was firmly decided." On Part II of the questionnaire she marked "My son or daughter was entirely responsible for the decision."

4. The father, referring to his son, said "I think he will get about as good and education at [the neighborhood school] as he would at Archbishop MacDonald." On Part I of the questionnaire, regarding a reason for choosing the neighborhood school, he responded "4" (of great importance) to the state-

ment: "This school would provide a good preparation for my son/ daughter to go to university."

5. The mother said that her eldest son went to the Archbishop MacDonald open house. She did not know what program he was taking at the neighborhood school. On two items of Part II, about continuing or closing down the honors program at Archbishop MacDonald high school, she marked "DK" (don't know).

Parents of students enrolled in the honors program

1. The mother stated "I heard that the program was harder and after you get through, it is much easier on the Departmentals since you know so much more detail on the subjects you are studying." She marked "5" (strongly agree) the statement: "An honors program is a better preparation for university than is the regular matriculation (university entrance) program."

2. The mother said "Both my husband and I tried to discourage her." On the questionnaire she marked that her daughter was entirely responsible for the decision.

3. The father said "The junior high school she attended recommended that she attend Archbishop MacDonald High School." He responded with a "4" (a reason of great importance) to the statement: "The junior high school my son or daughter attended recommended this school."

4. The mother stated "At other schools my daughter attended she was bored and didn't like the teachers. Basically, there is a challenge at Mac." She marked "5" (of very great importance, a deciding factor) opposite the statement: "The school offered a program that my son/daughter would find challenging." This was the only reason for choosing which was marked "5".

APPENDIX 6

ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

General Comments

The questionnaire items were based on responses noted during interviews of the various groups. It was decided that a single questionnaire would be advantageous; that is, all of the groups would respond to the same items. This would enable direct comparisons to be made among the various stakeholders. Insofar as possible, the wording used by the interviewee was used. For example, in Part I, #8, the statement to which degree of agreement was to be expressed read: "This school has an atmosphere where everyone wants to learn, rather than being forced." It was found that a layperson's wording was, for some items, interpreted as biased by educators. In general, students and parents found the questionnaire acceptable. However, for some items, the intent was much clearer to the participants in one of the groups as compared to those in another groups. For example, in Part I, #12, the statement on the students' questionnaire was: "I didn't think I was an honors calibre student," and the students could rate this as a reason for choosing to attend the honors program at Archbishop MacDonald, or for attending the neighborhood high school. For parents, the item read: "I didn't consider my son/daughter an honors calibre student." Some parents who did consider their sons/daughters to be honors calibre students had difficulty rating this as a reason for choosing to attend a certain high school. In the analysis which follows, the comments on each item will identify any where respondents noted such difficulty.

The rate of return of questionnaire was very good, as shown by the figures in the table below.

Table A6.1

Questionnaire Response Rate by Group

Group	Questionnaires Sent	Rec'd	Rate
Students attending Archbishop MacDonald	103	88	85%
Parents of above students	103	71	69%
Students attending other high schools	179	138	77%
Parents of above students	179	111	62%
Students no longer in the system	21	7	33%
Parents of above students	21	7	33%
Staff members, junior high schools	190	153	81%

The students no longer in the system consisted of two distinct groups: those whose families had moved out of Edmonton, and those whose families remained in Edmonton but were attending a public or private school in September, 1984. The second group was small relative to the first. In passing, it might be noted that parents' comments indicated that several public school supporters had sons or daughters enrolled in the honors program at Archbishop MacDonald High School.

Junior high school principals, assistant principals, school counsellors, and teachers of Grade IX English, Social Studies, Mathematics and Science were asked to complete Part 2, only, of the questionnaire. All of the 28 junior high schools responded, although some of the staff members did not. Some schools requested more forms than were needed, therefore the response rate is probably well above the 81% reported in Table 1.

Analysis of Part I: Reasons for Choosing the Above-Named School

The instructions were to rate the importance of each of the reasons given in deciding which school the student would attend to take Grade X. The "above named school" in each case was the school named by the student or parent as the one chosen for attendance in 1984-85. The following code for responses was used.

1 = of no importance at all 2 = of a little importance
3 = of considerable importance 4 = of great importance
5 = of very great importance (a deciding factor)

In the analysis that follows, each reason is given as it appeared on the questionnaire for students. The wording on the parents' form was slightly different (see Appendix 1). Note that N, in each table, is the number of people who responded to that statement.

Statement 1: Many of my friends are going to this school.

Group	Responses 1	2	3	4	5	N	Mean
Students, Archb. MacDonald	30	31	17	8	2	88	2.10
Parents of above	31	25	11	1	1	71	1.78
Students, other high schools	4	20	41	49	24	138	3.50
Parents of above	15	26	39	15	16	111	2.92

Comments

A summary of responses to item one is given above. The table states that of the 88 students attending Archbishop MacDonald High School who responded, 30 rated the statement of no importance as a reason for choosing that school; 31 rated it as of a little importance; and so on, with 2 rating it as a deciding factor. The average or the response numbers for the 88 students involved was 2.10. On the whole, for these students, the statement that "Many of my friends

are going to this school" was of a little importance in choosing to attend. For students who opted not to enroll in the honors program the pattern was quite different, as many students rated this reason as important.

Statement 2: An older brother or sister went to this school.

Group	Responses 1	2	3	4	5	N	Mean
Students, Archb. MacDonald	73	3	7	4	1	88	1.38
Parents of above	58	3	1	3	2	67	1.33
Students, other high schools	66	31	21	13	7	138	2.01
Parents of above	53	17	21	12	7	110	2.12

Comments

For students who chose to attend Archbishop MacDonald this was, in general, of no importance in making the choice. For a substantial number of the other students it was of some importance.

Statement 3: The school offered a program that I would find challenging.

Group	Responses 1	2	3	4	5	N	Mean
Students, Archb. MacDonald	1	3	18	26	40	88	4.15
Parents of above	0	1	3	17	50	71	4.63
Students, other high schools	24	31	44	32	7	138	2.76
Parents of above	7	18	37	37	12	109	3.26

Comments

Students attending Archbishop MacDonald High School rated this as a compelling reason for choosing as they did. On the whole, it was "of great importance" or "of very great importance (a deciding factor)." In general this was a mild reason, only, for students not enrolled in the honors program, for arriving at a decision. This pattern was to be expected.

Statement 4: The school has a good reputation for scholarship.

Group	Responses 1	2	3	4	5	N	Mean
Students, Archb. MacDonald	6	7	13	37	25	88	3.77
Parents of above	3	1	17	25	23	69	3.93
Students, other high schools	26	32	39	30	10	137	2.75
Parents of above	11	20	29	38	11	109	3.16

Comments

The responses here, also, are as might be expected, with the students in the honors program rating this statement as more important that the other students.

Statement 5: I thought high marks would be approved by students at this school.

Group	Responses 1	2	3	4	5	N	Mean
Students, Archb. MacDonald	27	16	23	16	5	87	3.15
Parents of above	14	12	10	18	9	63	2.94
Student, other high schools	52	40	28	16	2	138	2.10
Parents of above	28	22	29	25	4	108	2.58

Comments

The response patterns among the four groups were not too dissimilar. Groups involved with the honors program rated this to be of somewhat greater importance than did the other groups.

Statement 6: The junior high school I attended recommended this school.

Group	Responses 1	2	3	4	5	N	Mean
Students, Archb. MacDonald	26	15	23	17	7	88	2.59
Parents of above	19	9	19	15	9	71	2.80
Students, other high schools	40	29	37	22	10	138	2.51
Parents of above	42	24	18	14	10	108	2.31

Comments

Response patterns were roghly similar for all groups. The general feeling was that this reason was of some importance, only.

Statement 7: This school would provide a good preparation for me to go to university.

Group	Responses 1	2	3	4	5	N	Mean
Students, Archb. MacDonald	0	3	11	19	55	88	4.43
Parents of above	0	0	5	19	47	71	4.59
Students, other high schools	7	15	45	53	18	138	3.43
Parents of above	4	7	36	43	21	111	3.63

Comments

Generally speaking, all groups rated this reason as quite important, but the students in the honors program and their parents considered it to be of greater importance than the other groups.

Statement 8: This school has an atmosphere where everyone wants to learn, rather than being forced.

Group	Responses 1	2	3	4	5	N	Mean
Students, Archb. MacDonald	10	7	21	38	12	88	3.40
Parents of above	2	3	13	26	26	70	4.01
Students, other high schools	22	32	33	39	11	137	2.89
Parents of above	10	18	40	27	13	108	3.14

Comments

Parents rated this reason of greater importance than the students in the corresponding groups. While the honors students rated this as of somewhat more importance that the students not in the honors program, the difference was not great.

Statement 9: The school is nearby or easy to reach by bus.

Group	Responses 1	2	3	4	5	N	Mean
Students, Archb. MacDonald	51	18	8	3	7	87	1.82
Parents of above	34	14	5	12	5	70	2.14
Students, other high schools	11	19	20	41	47	137	3.68
Parents of the above	13	10	21	28	38	110	3.62

Comments

As one might expect, proximity of the school chosen was <u>not</u> a factor for the groups involved in the honors program, while for the other groups it was a factor of more than considerable importance.

Statement 10: This school has athletics, clubs and other extra curricular activities that I like.

Group	Responses 1	2	3	4	5	N	Mean
Students, Archb. MacDonald	30	23	21	11	3	88	2.25
Parents of above	24	17	21	7	1	70	2.20
Students, other high schools	28	19	27	37	27	137	3.12
Parents of above	18	24	26	24	19	111	3.02

Comments

This reason was rated as more important by the groups not involved with the honors program than those that were.

Statement 11: The influence of other students at this school would be good for me.

Group	Responses 1	2	3	4	5	N	Mean
Students, Archb. MacDonald	19	17	29	21	2	88	2.66
Parents of above	9	5	28	20	8	70	3.19
Students, other high schools	24	29	46	30	9	137	2.79
Parents of above	18	26	33	29	4	110	2.77

Comments

Considerably more importance was attached to this reason by the parents involved in the honors program than the other three groups.

Statement 12: I didn't think I was an honors calibre student.

Group	Responses 1	2	3	4	5	N	Mean
Students, Archb. MacDonald	47	20	15	4	2	88	1.80
Parents of above	36	8	10	4	2	60	1.80
Students, other high schools	66	26	20	12	12	136	2.10
Parents of above	49	18	18	10	5	100	2.04

Comments

None of the groups rated this reason highly. There is a difference between the two groups of students in the direction that might be expected, but the difference is not great.

Statement 13: The social development for me would be better at this school.

Group	Responses 1	2	3	4	5	N	Mean
Students, Archb. MacDonald	19	15	31	19	4	88	2.70
Parents of above	8	15	25	13	9	70	3.00
Students, other high schools	19	27	43	34	15	137	2.99
Parents of above	13	25	32	35	4	109	2.93

Comments

All four groups tended to rate this reason to be of more than a little importance.

Statement 14: This is a friendly school

Group	Responses 1	2	3	4	5	N	Mean
Students, Archb. MacDonald	8	6	27	26	21	88	3.52
Parents of above	4	3	26	20	17	70	3.61
Students, other high schools	7	12	34	53	32	137	3.66
Parents of above	5	19	46	32	9	111	3.19

Comments

The perceived friendliness of the school appeared to be of considerable importance in making the decision for each of the four groups.

Analysis of Part II: Views on the Honors Program

Part II of the questionnaire had identical wording for all groups. As for Part I, it was sent to Grade X students at Archbishop MacDonald High School, their parents, Grade X students who had been invited to enroll in the honors program but had declined, and then enrolled in their neighborhood schools, and the parents of these students. In addition, a fifth group consisting of staff members in the 28 junior high schools operating in the Edmonton Catholic school system was asked to complete Part II of the questionnaire.

The instructions were as follows:
Give your views regarding the honors program at Archbishop MacDonald H.S. by marking the extent of your agreement with each of the statements below. Circle the number that corresponds to your opinion, using the following code.

1 = Strongly Disagree (SD), 2 = Disagree (D),
3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree (N), 4 = Agree (N),
5 = Strongly Agree (SA), 6 = Don't Know (DK).

A summary of the responses for each item is set forth below. Note that in calculating the means, the "Don't Know" responses and No Response (NR) were not included. The column labelled N gives the number of respondents who chose response 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5; that is, the responses used in the computation of the mean.

Statement 1: Only those students who learn quickly and easily should take an honors program.

Group	Responses 1	2	3	4	5	6	NR	N	Mean
Students, Arch Mac	8	27	8	28	13	4	0	84	3.13
Parents of above	9	21	10	21	9	1	0	70	3.00
Students, other H.S	11	35	14	59	14	3	2	133	3.23
Parents of above	10	24	15	32	22	5	3	103	3.31
Staff, Jr. H.S.	9	51	16	41	33	3	0	150	3.25

Comments

The means of the responses for the five groups all clustered about the "Neither Agree nor Disagree" view. Groups involved with the honors programs actually tended to agree with the statement slightly less than did the other groups.

Statement 2: In a school with few students who are going to university, and many who are not, there is a lot of pressure on the matriculation students NOT to get good marks.

Group	Responses 1	2	3	4	5	6	NR	N	Mean
Students, Arch Mac.	26	12	7	18	7	16	2	70	3.13
Parents of above	11	13	10	17	9	10	1	60	3.00
Students, other H.S	44	32	14	23	7	15	3	120	2.31
Parents of above	22	34	11	25	7	8	4	99	2.61
Staff, Jr. H.S.	27	59	13	36	8	9	1	143	2.57

Comments

While differences among the means for the various groups were not great, the groups not involved with the honors program tended to to disagree with the statement more than the other two groups. It was noted, also, that the distribution for each group was bimodal.

Statement 3: A small school is more likely to be friendly.

Group	Responses 1	2	3	4	5	6	NR	N	Mean
Students, Arch Mac.	5	5	5	39	26	8	0	80	3.95
Parents of above	0	2	4	42	21	2	0	69	4.13
Students, other H.S	8	27	18	54	22	7	2	128	3.43
Parents of above	6	10	21	52	15	5	2	104	3.58
Staff, Jr. H.S.	4	12	24	62	48	3	0	150	3.92

Comments

Students in the honors program at Archbishop MacDonald, their parents, and staff members of the junior high schools generally agreed

more strongly with this statement than did the other two groups. It should be noted, however, that all of the groups tended to agree with the statement.

Statement 4: The Edmonton Catholic School System ought to continue to offer a full honors program at Archbishop MacDonald High School.

	Responses								
Group	1	2	3	4	5	6	NR	N	Mean
Students, Arch Mac.	1	2	4	20	58	3	0	85	4.55
Parents of above	0	0	1	19	50	1	0	70	4.70
Students, other H.S	2	5	22	56	28	23	2	113	3.91
Parents of above	1	1	23	36	34	14	2	95	4.06
Staff, Jr. H.S.	3	4	21	53	62	10	0	143	4.76

Comments

The means for all of the groups indicated a strong agreement with this statement.

Statement 5: While both society and the student benefit from provisions such as the honors program at Archbishop MacDonald school, society benefits most.

	Responses								
Group	1	2	3	4	5	6	NR	N	Mean
Students, Arch Mac.	2	16	25	20	11	14	0	74	3.30
Parents of above	1	6	16	17	17	13	1	57	3.75
Students, other H.S	11	27	30	27	6	35	2	101	2.90
Parents of above	3	15	36	29	11	15	2	94	3.32
Staff, Jr. H.S.	6	28	51	34	18	15	1	137	3.22

Comments

All groups tended to agree, somewhat, with the statement, except for the students in high schools other than Archbishop MacDonald.

Statement 6: A strong emphasis on academic achievement may not be good for students socially, emotionally and spiritually.

	Responses								
Group	1	2	3	4	5	6	NR	N	Mean
Students, Arch Mac.	20	21	12	20	11	4	0	84	2.77
Parents of above	23	31	8	8	1	0	0	71	2.06
Students, other H.S	8	40	27	33	13	15	2	121	3.02
Parents of above	14	46	17	20	5	7	2	102	2.57
Staff, Jr. H.S.	38	60	16	22	8	4	5	144	2.32

Comments

Students in high schools other than Archbishop MacDonald tended to give a neutral response, while the other four groups tended to disagree with the statement. There was a rather wide range of responses in all of the groups.

Statement 7: Society has invested so much in school provisions for the handicapped that we should now be able to help the brighter students and not try to homogenize them.

	Responses								
Group	1	2	3	4	5	6	NR	N	Mean
Students, Arch Mac.	3	7	11	33	15	19	0	69	3.72
Parents of above	1	6	8	22	28	5	1	65	4.08
Students, other H.S	8	13	27	53	13	20	4	114	3.44
Parents of above	4	9	18	38	25	14	3	94	3.76
Staff, Jr. H.S.	6	18	22	53	44	4	6	143	3.78

Comments

While all groups indicated a general agreement with the statement, the students in high schools other than Archbishop MacDonald tended to agree less strongly than did the other groups.

Statement 8: The honors program in Archbishop MacDonald High School should be closed down.

	Responses								
Group	1	2	3	4	5	6	NR	N	Mean
Students, Arch Mac.	63	17	5	0	1	1	1	86	1.36
Parents of above	56	14	0	0	0	0	1	70	1.20
Students, other H.S	47	48	20	3	2	15	3	120	1.87
Parents of above	36	42	12	1	1	17	2	92	1.79
Staff, Jr. H.S.	62	52	18	4	5	9	3	141	1.85

Comments

All groups tended to disagree strongly with this statement. It seems worth noting, however, that there were more "Don't Know" responses than might be expected.

Statement 9: A danger of an honors program is that the parents and students may think they are "special."

Group	Responses 1	2	3	4	5	6	NR	N	Mean
Students, Arch Mac.	15	19	9	28	13	4	0	84	3.06
Parents of above	14	22	12	19	2	1	1	70	2.61
Students, other H.S	7	26	28	49	18	3	7	128	3.35
Parents of above	12	31	16	35	8	7	2	102	2.96
Staff, Jr. H.S.	17	36	27	44	21	6	2	145	3.11

Comments

The response distributions tended to be bimodal, indicating a certain degree of polarization of views with respect to this statement.

Statement 10: An honors program is a better preparation for university than is the regular matriculation (university entrance) program.

Group	Responses 1	2	3	4	5	6	NR	N	Mean
Students, Arch Mac.	1	1	9	23	50	4	0	84	4.43
Parents of above	1	3	2	22	36	4	3	64	4.39
Students, other H.S	9	34	15	50	16	11	3	124	3.24
Parents of above	4	13	23	40	13	16	2	93	3.48
Staff, Jr. H.S.	6	21	27	45	29	23	2	128	3.55

Comments

The groups involved in the honors program tended to agree somewhat more strongly with this statement that did the other groups. All groups, however, were generally in agreement.

Analysis of Part III: Who Decided on the School to be Attended.

Instructions for the students' version of Part III is shown below, but the version for parents was almost identical (see Appendix 1).

In the following list of statements, mark (X) the ONE that best describes who decided which school you would attend for Grade X.

The response numbers in the table below correspond to the statements in the questionnaire as follows:

1 = student entirely responsible
2 = 90% student, 10% parents
3 = 75% student, 25% parents
4 = 50% student, 50% parents
5 = 25% student, 75% parents
6 = 10% student, 90% parents
7 = parents entirely responsible

As in the tables for Part I of the questionnaire, N indicates the number of people in each group who responded.

Group	Responses 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N	Mean
Students, Arch Mac.	21	25	12	12	8	4	6	88	2.97
Parents of above	14	15	21	13	4	3	1	71	2.87
Students, other H.S	46	38	23	19	7	1	1	135	2.33
Parents of above	25	24	23	32	2	2	2	110	2.78

Comments

Responses by both students and parents indicat that students tended to have the major say in deciding which schools they would attend.

APPENDIX 7

ANALYSIS OF WRITTEN COMMENTS MADE BY STAFF MEMBERS OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

Only Part II, Opinions About the Honors Program at Archbishop MacDonald High School, was completed by staff members of the junior high schools. A careful sorting of the questionnaires according to the nature of the comments written in, resulted in the following distribution.

The honors program is a good idea, we need this	15
Teachers in an honors program must be "special"	6
Honors programs should be offered in other high schools	4
The honors program should be broadened; eg. fine arts	4
Students have to learn to live in society as it is	3
The honors program should be dropped	2
Miscellaneous	17
No written comments	94

Examples of "the honors program is a good idea" follow:

* I believe there is a definite need to provide an honors program for students who may wish to enter such a specialized program....

* It prepares students to be the leaders of the future.

* There is a need for this type of school. I am certain other high schools will be taking a close look. This can only be beneficial.

* I feel that an honors program such as this is a necessary component in any school system's curriculum.

* An excellent program for the gifted academic student and should definitely be retained.

Examples of "teachers must be special" are as follows:

* Make sure that the teachers are well qualified to teach the desired programs - especially at the honors level.

* Honors programs need honors (master) teachers.

Examples of "miscellaneous" comments are as follows:

* The distance which must be travelled to read Mac High may deter students from attending.

* I think that the program should be better advertised so more students with ability could take advantage of it.

* My concern is that the pressure of such a program is handled in such a manner as to not have a negative effect on the students.

* An "honors" program should definitely provide a challenge to the above average student. Students in this program should be expected to work hard.

* I think students should be encouraged to take the honors program in their strong area and the regular matriculation program in weaker areas.